Thomas Michael Loome

LETTERS OF LORD ACTON

GEORGE ALLEN
PUBLISHER LONDON
156 CHARING CROSS ROAD
RUSKIN HOUSE

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Yours truly
Acton

LETTERS OF
LORD ACTON

TO MARY, DAUGHTER OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR, BY

HERBERT PAUL

LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD
1904
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Very truly yours
Otto

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The MacMillan Company, 1904

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

"Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His Light
For us i' the dark to rise by."

THIS VOLUME

IS DEDICATED TO

LADY ACTON

BY M. D.

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PREFACE

It does not seem likely that any one, after reading these letters, would question the desirability of their publication. In general they speak for themselves; a few notes have been added to explain allusions which by lapse of time have become obscure; some names and passages, and some letters, have been omitted. After 1885 Lord Acton touched upon questions which are still matters of controversy, and therefore the selection closes with that year. The letters were written to the daughter who lived with Mr. Gladstone from the time of her own birth, in the middle of the last century, to the day of his death, at its close. The idea of publishing a selection of them arose in 1898; and Lord Acton, with certain reservations, assented to it. But it was felt by competent judges that it would be trespassing in Mr. Morley's domain; and Mr. Morley himself was strongly of opinion that the mutilation which at that period would have been necessary, would seriously impair the interest and the significance of the book. So, for the time, the project was abandoned. On the other hand, in the judgment of the eminent authorities to whom the letters were submitted, their value was of such a nature that it was evident they ought to be published as soon as Mr. Morley should have completed his task.

With the exception of passages critical of himself or his policy, the letters were not read by Mr. Gladstone; for, while he made it a rule to shun all that was laudatory of himself, he always welcomed and carefully studied anything deliberately thought out or written in an opposite sense. His own correspondence with Lord Acton extended over a period of some

thirty years; but it does not cover nearly so wide a range of subjects, or appeal so much to general interests, as the series now printed.

To the recipient of these letters from Lord Acton they will always be precious, not merely for the judgments they contain and the memories they recall, but also as the outward symbol of an inward and priceless possession—the treasure of his friendship.

MARY DREW.

10*th January* 1904.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In compiling the Introductory Memoir which follows I have been chiefly indebted to Dr. Shaw's excellent "Bibliography of Lord Acton," edited for the Royal Historical Society, and to a most interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1903. I have also consulted Mr. Bryce's "Studies in Contemporary Biography," Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's "Out of the Past," and an obituary notice in the *Cambridge Review* for October 1902, signed "F. W. M." Mr. Morley was good enough to lend me the copies of Lord Acton's letters to Mr. Gladstone which had been made for the purposes of his Biography. Neither the materials at my command nor the circumstances of the case justified me in attempting to write a Life of Lord Acton. I have merely sought to furnish such information as the readers of these letters would naturally desire to possess.

HERBERT PAUL.

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

Lord Acton was dimly known to the general public as a prodigy of learning. He left no great work behind him, and is often quoted as an example of natural gifts buried under an accumulation of excessive, or ill-digested knowledge. The image of a Dryasdust, of a book-worm, of a walking Dictionary was excited by his name among those to whom he was a name, and nothing more. To those who had the privilege of his acquaintance he appeared almost the precise opposite of a picture too unlike the truth to be even a caricature. For Lord Acton was a thorough man of the world. An insatiable, systematic, and effective reader, he was anything but a recluse. No man had a keener zest for the society of his intellectual equals. No one took a stronger interest in the events of the day, and the gossip of the hour. His learning, though vast and genuine, was never obtruded. Always ready to impart information, he shrank from the semblance of volunteering it. Indeed, if no direct appeal were made to him, he would let people without a tithe of his knowledge lay down the law as if they knew everything, and would betray no other sign of amusement than an enigmatical smile. He had something of Addison's tendency, exhibited in a much more remarkable and much less agreeable form by Mr. Froude, to draw out rather than to repress the sallies of conceited ignorance. But for any one who wished to learn his resources were in their fullest extent available. To be in his company was like being in the best of historical libraries with the best of historical catalogues. A question produced

not only a direct and complete answer, but also useful advice, about the books which the inquirer ought to consult. On matters of opinion he was much more reticent. Sometimes, without a moment's warning, he would utter a paradox which from any one else might have seemed the mere recklessness of sciolism, but which, coming from him, was treasured in the memory. I remember, for instance, his telling me that Rousseau had produced more effect with his pen than Aristotle, or Cicero, or Saint Augustine, or Saint Thomas Aquinas, or any other man who ever lived. But such sweeping assertions were few. His general attitude was one of rigid adhesion to certain facts, and careful avoidance of hasty judgments. It was not that Lord Acton had no strong opinions. Few people had stronger opinions than he, and their foundation was so solid that it was almost impossible to displace them. But he liked to hear all sides of every question, and to make allowance for all errors which did not involve a violation of the moral law. Any apology, or even excuse, for departure from the highway of the Decalogue he regarded as in itself a crime.

The force and originality of Lord Acton's conversation are reflected, and may be inferred, from his epistolary style. In absolutely uncongenial company he would maintain the silence of the tomb. But when there was any community of taste or subject, he shone equally as a talker and as a listener. It was not that he tried to shine. He did not aim at epigram, and his humour was as spontaneous as it was delightful. He loved to stimulate conversation in others, and no man had more sympathy with a good thing which he had not said himself. His manner was such that his compliments sometimes suggested a faint suspicion of insincerity. The suspicion, however, was unjust, and was merely the result of a subtle, half ironic manner. He was entirely free from jealousy, vanity, and egoism.

A merciless intellectual critic he could hardly help being. He had so trained and furnished his mind that it rejected instinctively a sophism or a false pretence.

> Antonio Stradivari has an eye
> That winces at false work and loves the true.

His intimate friends agreed that he was the raciest and most stimulating of companions, with an instinctive perception for the true significance of a hint, so that they never had to tell him a thing twice, or to explain it once. That letters take their tone from the recipient as well as from the writer is a commonplace, almost a platitude. While therefore only Lord Acton's half of this correspondence is printed, the nature of the other half may be surmised from what he says himself. Such letters as the criticism of "John Inglesant," or the view of Mr. Gladstone as he will appear to posterity, or the estimate of Ultramontane ethics, stand out as solid documents with a permanent and independent value of their own. The more numerous specimens of his more familiar writing will readily suggest why he found this correspondence so congenial, and what was the reason in each case for his choice of topics. The pliability and adaptability of his mind, his easy transitions from grave to gay, his sympathy with all a friend's interests and feelings, are visible in every page.

Lord Acton's personality was a negative of all shams. His spacious forehead, his deep sonorous voice, his piercing eyes, and his air of vigilant repose, were the outward signs of genuine power, in which the latent force behind is greater than anything the surface displays. He might well have sat to Titian for one of those ecclesiastical statesmen whose mingled strength and subtlety have attracted the admiring gaze of three hundred and fifty years. He was a good talker because he was a good listener, always interested in the subject, not seeking to exhaust it, rather putting in from time

to time the exactly appropriate word. To draw Lord Acton out, to make him declare himself upon some doubtful or delicate point, was a hopeless task. His face at once assumed the expression of the Sphinx. To students, on the other hand, his generosity was unbounded, and the accumulations of a lifetime were at the disposal of any one who was willing to profit by them. It will be seen from these letters that Lord Acton was not merely a learned man. His perceptions were quick and shrewd. His judgment was clear and sound. He watched every move in the political game with a vigilant keenness quickened by the depth of his interest in the great leader whom he followed to the end. Circumstances had made him from his boyhood familiar with the best political society not merely of England but of Europe. He was as much at home in Italy and in Germany as in his native land, so that he could compare Mr. Gladstone with foreign statesmen of his own time as well as with British statesmen of the past. Although it has been roughly estimated by his friend Mr. Bryce that Lord Acton read on an average an octavo volume a day, as often as not in German, he was never a bookworm. When he was in London he constantly dined out, and he corresponded freely with continental friends. Few people were more agreeable in a country house. No one assumed more naturally the aspect of disengaged leisure, and it was possible to live in the same house with him for weeks without ever seeing him read. Even the frivolities of the world were not beneath his notice. He liked to know about marriages before they occurred. He was an excellent judge of cookery and of wine. Yet the passion of his life was reading. It was, as has been well said, like a physical appetite, and it seemed, if it changed at all, to grow stronger as he grew older. His reading was chiefly historical. He was no great classical scholar. The voluminous notes to his inaugural lecture at Cambridge

do not contain a single quotation from any classical author of Greece or Rome. He cared little for poetry, for art, or for pure literature, the literature of style. Of physical science he knew only what most educated men know. But he was well versed in metaphysics, he was a deep theologian, and his knowledge of modern history was only bounded by the limits of the theme.

John Emerick Edward Dalberg Acton was born at Naples on the 10th of January 1834, the only son of Sir Richard Acton, seventh baronet, and the heiress of the German house whose name, Dalberg, he bore. An Italian birthplace, a German mother, and an English father stamped him from the beginning as a citizen of the world. His grandfather, Sir John Francis Acton, had been Prime Minister of Naples under Ferdinand the Fourth, and had reorganised the Neapolitan navy. His maternal grandfather entered the service of France, and represented Louis the Eighteenth at the Congress of Vienna. No wonder that Lord Acton spoke German and Italian as well as French, or that the chief foreign languages were as familiar to him as his own. In fact, as well as in blood, he was only half an Englishman. His entire freedom from insular prejudice, which was peculiarly noticeable in his opinions on Irish affairs, must be attributed not less to his religion than to his origin. He adhered throughout his life, notwithstanding many difficulties which would have shaken a less profound faith, to the Church of Rome. Nor was he one of those Catholics who remain Catholics because they do not care enough about the matter to change. Liberal as he was, tolerant as he was, broad as he was, the central truths of the Christian religion and of the Catholic Church were not merely articles of his creed, but guiding principles of his conduct. If these letters show anything, they show that in Lord Acton's mind, and in his estimate of human affairs, religion overmastered all mundane considerations. It was with

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him first, and last, and everywhere. Upon that noble text, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," his life and writings are a sermon. Hating Ultramontanism and Vaticanism as only a passionate believer in the Church which they disfigured could hate them, cherishing the right of private judgment within the widest limits which Rome had ever allowed, he died, as he was baptized, in the faith of his ancestors. Perhaps his allegiance was none the less staunch because it was ethical and rational; because he clung always and before all things, in the clash of creeds, to "those things which are certain still, the grand, simple landmarks of morality." "If," said the greatest preacher in the Church of England sixty years ago, "if there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward." Lord Acton would have been unable to conceive the protasis. The apodosis he would not have denied.

Sir Richard Acton died while his son was a child, and at the age of nine Sir John was sent by his mother to the Roman Catholic College at Oscott, of which Dr. Wiseman was the head. Wiseman, until Mr. Wilfrid Ward published his excellent biography, was chiefly known to English Protestants as the instrument of papal aggression, and the subject of Robert Browning's satirical poem, "Bishop Blougram's Apology." He was in truth an able and accomplished man, a really great organiser, thoroughly well qualified to preside over an educational establishment like Oscott. He was not in any sense of the word a Liberal, and in later years the pupil did not always agree with the master. But of Oscott Lord Acton always spoke with affection, and the five years which he spent there in the pursuit of knowledge were among the happiest in a happy existence. It was the young man's own desire to enter

the University of Cambridge. For he did not, like some Catholics, hold it sinful to receive education from a Protestant source. The law would not even then have prevented him from matriculating at Cambridge, as it would at Oxford, and yet the colleges, more bigoted than the law, refused, on what they doubtless considered religious grounds, to receive a student as hungry for learning as ever sought admission within their venerable precincts. Sir John Acton, so peculiarly fitted by nature and education to adorn and illustrate a University, may well have asked with Macaulay, what was the faith of Edward the Third, and Henry the Sixth, of Margaret of Anjou, and Margaret of Richmond, from whose foundations the head of a Catholic family was turned away. If Acton had gone to Cambridge, he would have known more about Herodotus and Thucydides, Cæsar and Tacitus. Of history in its more modern sense, and its more specially ecclesiastical aspects, he would probably have learnt less. Instead of keeping his terms under the walls of the Fitzwilliam, he went to Munich, and studied with the illustrious Döllinger. Döllinger was distinguished for learning even among German professors, and though, unlike his pupil, eminent in classical scholarship, as well as in theology, was before all things an historian. He it was who taught Acton to look at everything from the historical point of view, and to remember that, in the immortal words of Coleridge, "The man who puts even Christianity before truth will go on to put the Church before Christianity, and will end by putting himself before the Church." The time came both to Döllinger and to Acton, when the voice of the Church said one thing, and the voice of truth another. They did not hesitate. But the results to the priest were different from the results to the layman.

At Munich, meanwhile, Sir John Acton laboured prodigiously. Latin and Greek he never mastered as

he would have mastered them under Munro and Kennedy. But he learned them well enough for the purposes of an historian, with more help than Gibbon had, though not with the same innate genius. Of French, German, Italian, and Spanish, he became a master. At any subsequent period he would just as soon have written or spoken in French or German as in English. About this time he began to collect the splendid library which he formed in his country house at Aldenham in Shropshire. It consisted, when complete, of sixty thousand volumes, many of them covered with his marginal notes. Unlike most libraries, this one had a definite object, and reason for existence. Lord Acton was from the schoolroom to the grave an ardent, convinced, and enthusiastic Liberal. It was his aim to write a History of Liberty. The book was never written. Not indolence but a procrastination, which resulted from cherishing an impossibly high ideal, prevented it from coming to the light. One of his reasons for not beginning the History of Liberty was that the whole truth about the French Revolution had not yet been discovered. But the library was collected to illustrate the History, and thus the books, now at Cambridge, have a peculiar interest, or rather a peculiar character of their own. When they were at Aldenham, Lord Acton knew the precise position which each volume occupied in its case and shelf. It is related that on one of his visits to his beloved room, while the house was let, the servants found him reading when they came in the morning to open the shutters. He had forgotten to go to bed. Mr. Bryce ("Studies in Contemporary Biography," pp. 396–97) has described in a peculiarly vivid and impressive manner how Acton was dominated and haunted by the idea that he never fulfilled. Late one night, in his library at Cannes, while Mr. Bryce was staying with him, it found vent in speech. "He spoke for six or

seven minutes only; but he spoke like a man inspired; seeming as if, from some mountain summit high in air, he saw beneath him the far-winding path of human progress from dim Cimmerian shores of prehistoric shadow into the fuller yet broken and fitful light of the modern time. The eloquence was splendid, yet greater than the eloquence was the penetrating vision which discerned through all events and in all ages the play of those moral forces, now creating, now destroying, always transmuting, which had moulded and remodelled institutions, and had given to the human spirit its ceaselessly changing forms of energy. It was as if the whole landscape of history had been suddenly lit up by a burst of sunlight. I have never heard from any other lips any discourse like this, nor from his did I ever hear the like again."

With Professor Döllinger Sir John Acton visited France, and made many distinguished friends, including the foremost among French Liberal Catholics, Montalembert; Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous author of "Democracy in America," whose memoirs record the blunders of the Second Republic in France with a concentrated irony not unworthy of Tacitus; and Fustel de Coulanges, whose *Cité Antique* was as well known thirty years ago in Oxford as in Paris. His German friends were innumerable. Bluntschli, the great jurist, and von Sybel, the historian of the French Revolution, were among them. Of the illustrious Ranke he proclaimed himself a disciple, and it is intensely characteristic of him that his favourite among the moral philosophers of his own day was a Protestant, Rothe. Rothe's *Ethik*, he said, was the book which he would give to any one whom he wished to turn out a good Catholic. But as Lord Acton would not have crossed the room to make ten proselytes, the value of this selection may easily be exaggerated. To Protestant theology he paid as much attention as to Catholic. Those who feared

God and followed Christ in every nation belonged to his household of faith.

Lord Acton deserved as well as Cobden, though for quite other reasons, to be called an international man. Not a great traveller, as travelling is understood in these days of universal locomotion, he was familiar with the chief capitals of Europe, and, so soon as his formal education was completed, he paid a visit to the United States. He was then, and always remained, an ardent admirer of the American Constitution, and of the illustrious men who made it. Its temporary breakdown in 1861 was scarcely then in sight. Slave States and Free States were flourishing side by side, and the vital question whether a State had the right to secede from the Union, which could only be determined by civil war, still slumbered in abeyance. Acton held strongly Calhoun's doctrine of Sovereign States, and that is why he "broke his heart over the surrender of Lee." If the point had been decided by the letter of the Constitution, so that the Supreme Court could have given an authoritative decision upon it as upon the right of recapturing fugitive slaves, many thousands of lives might have been spared. When Sir John Acton went to Washington, the Abolitionists, though busy, were a small minority; they carried their lives in their hands, and the Republicans were no better prepared than the Democrats to adopt abolition as a principle. The Constitution did not expressly forbid slavery. Neither, as was often urged, did the New Testament. But the one said that all men were born equal, without specifying white men; and St. Paul declared that, within the pale of Christendom, there was neither Jew nor Greek, neither barbarian nor Scythian, neither bond nor free.

At the age of twenty-two Sir John Acton found himself in a country whose institutions differed as widely as possible from those of the United States. His mother had married Lord Granville, and he accompanied

his step-father to Moscow when Alexander the Second was crowned there in 1856. Lord Granville's reception was not a pleasant one, and even so accomplished a master of tact was driven to remonstrate against the coldness of his treatment, which was made more remarkable, though not more agreeable, by the flattering attentions paid to the French representative, M. de Morny. The Crimean War was hardly over, the ink on the Treaty of Paris was scarcely dry, and already Russia was on better terms with France than with England, while England was on worse terms with France than with Russia. The Emperor Napoleon had taken no pains to secure the fulfilment of the Treaty, whereas Lord Palmerston could not have displayed more zeal on behalf of Turkey if he had been the Sultan's Minister instead of the Queen's. The singularity of the situation could not fail to strike such a mind as Sir John Acton's. For the result of a war in which England had sacrificed twenty thousand men and seventy-six millions sterling to maintain what were called in a licentious phrase the liberties of Europe, was that she had not a friend on the European Continent, except Turkey. The distinguished company with whom Sir John Acton associated at Moscow were astonished "by the vastness of his knowledge and his mode of exposition" (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, page 502). Between Sir John and his step-father there could not be much real sympathy of taste or disposition. Lord Granville, as Matthew Arnold says, had studied in the book of the world rather than in the world of books. Nature seemed to have destined him to lead the Liberal party in the House of Lords. A thorough and genuine Liberal he always was. He belonged to the Manchester school, the school of Cobden and Bright. At the same time his finished manners, his imperturbable temper, and his ready wit, were just the right equipment for the chief of an aristocratic minority. He knew little, and cared

less, about the serious study of historical ethics, and historical politics, which was the essential business of Acton's life.

When he was twenty-five, Sir John Acton came to live at Aldenham, his country house in Shropshire, where there was ample room for many thousands of books. At the General Election held in the summer of 1859 he was returned to Parliament. Although Catholic Emancipation was thirty years old, its effects were almost exclusively confined to Ireland. It was hardly possible for a Roman Catholic to find a seat in England, and Sir John Acton sat for the small Irish burgh of Carlow, disfranchised in 1885. He was counted as a Whig, and a supporter of Lord Palmerston. But there was no sympathy, no point of contact, between the jaunty Premier and the erudite, philosophical, reflective Member for Carlow. "No one agrees with me and I agree with no one," said Sir John, with unusual tautology. It was not quite true. During those almost silent years of Parliamentary life he watched with critical and yet admiring interest the career of the illustrious man who was destined to be Palmerston's successor. Although Mr. Gladstone had not time to acquire the learning of his disciple, and upon the negative results of German scholarship was inclined to look askance, he was the best theologian, as well as the best financier, in Parliament, and few men were so well qualified to appreciate the range or the depth of Acton's researches. Acton, on his part, was fascinated by the combination of intellectual subtlety with practical capacity which made the Chancellor of the Exchequer the first man in the House of Commons. It was Palmerston's House, not Gladstone's, and the Derbyites were almost as numerous as the Palmerstonians. There was then no Gladstonian party at all. The Peelites were disbanded. Some had fallen back into the Conservative ranks. Some,

like Sidney Herbert, who died in 1861, Cardwell, and Gladstone himself, sat in the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston. Others had fallen out of public life altogether. Mr. Gladstone was still to the general public somewhat of an enigma. So lately as May 1858 he had been earnestly entreated both by Lord Derby and by Mr. Disraeli to accept the Board of Control on the resignation of Lord Ellenborough. He had voted for the Conservative Reform Bill of 1859, and against Lord Hartington's motion which turned Lord Derby out. When he accepted office in a Liberal Administration, his Tory constituents at Oxford were so much surprised and annoyed that they did their best to deprive him of his seat, and almost succeeded. The Whigs regarded him as a Tory and a Puseyite. The Tories bore a grudge against him because he had imposed a succession duty on landed estates. The Radicals considered him a lukewarm reformer, and in short hardly any one except his personal friends knew what to make of him. Then came the opportunity, and with it was displayed the full grandeur of the man. The Parliament of 1859 passed no successful or memorable legislation which was not connected with finance. Mr. Gladstone's Budgets were the great events of the Sessions from 1860 to 1865, and nothing at all like them has been known since. Almost every year taxes were repealed, expenditure was diminished, revenue was increased. After an obstinate conflict with the House of Lords the paper duty disappeared, and with it the power of the Lords to interfere with the taxation of the people. The duties on tea and sugar were so reduced as to bring those commodities within the reach of the working classes. The income-tax fell from ninepence to fourpence. The Commercial Treaty with France preserved the peace of Europe, and by the trade which it created between the two sides of the English Channel more than made up for the

losses inflicted upon British commerce by the American War. The speeches in which Mr. Gladstone's Budgets were expounded, especially those of 1860 and 1861, are superb specimens of the eloquence which increases, while it dignifies, the force of reason. His speech on the taxation of charities in 1863, though it failed to convince the House that charitable endowments should be taxed, was pronounced by a French critic to combine the grandeur of Berryer with the subtlety of Thiers. Acton was no financier. Neither his tastes nor his training qualified him to be a critic of Budgets, and when he became, as will presently appear, a political editor, he left that business to Mr. Lowe, claiming, with some apparent justification, that he thus made him Chancellor of the Exchequer. But he loved historical processes quite as much as historical results, and the hours which he spent in the House of Commons while the future leader of the Liberal party proved himself to be the economic successor of Walpole, Pitt, and Peel, fixed his political allegiance for the remainder of his life.

All the time that Mr. Gladstone was dazzling the country by the brilliance of his finance, and convincing practical men by the hard test of figures at the year's end, he had to fight his colleagues in the Cabinet as well as his opponents at St. Stephen's. Lord John Russell nearly ruined the Budget of 1860 by the persistency with which he pressed his unlucky Reform Bill. Lord Palmerston was continually demanding money for safeguards against a French invasion in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not believe. Cobden, from the outside, was urging the one genuine economist in the Cabinet to promote the cause of economy by resigning. Acton, though dissatisfied with "bald Cobdenites," as he termed them, was always on Gladstone's, and never on Palmerston's side. On the other hand there was a question of

European importance which united Mr. Gladstone hand and glove with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Italian unity, and Italian independence, were as dear to Palmerston and Russell as to Gladstone. Lord John's famous despatch of October 1861, vindicating the right of the Italians to choose their own rulers, was greeted with enthusiastic delight throughout the Italian peninsula. The cause for which Cavour lived, only to die in the moment of its triumph, was nowhere pleaded with more persuasive power than by Mr. Gladstone in the Parliament of 1859. Although Lord Palmerston's Government could never reckon upon a majority of fifteen, the opposition to their Italian policy came chiefly from a few Irish Catholics. Sir John Acton, though a Roman Catholic, and an Irish Member, took no part in it. He was deeply imbued with the spirit of liberty, and he held with all the strength of his mind that the cause of religion was the cause of freedom. To maintain Austria in Italy, or even the temporal power of the Pope, did not belong to Catholicism as he understood it. To identify soundness of faith with arbitrary rule was, in the eyes of a Liberal Catholic like Acton, one of those blunders which are worse than crimes. He was drawn to Mr. Gladstone both by admiration of his splendid capacity and by agreement with his continental Liberalism. In the House of Commons he hardly ever spoke. For six years he only put two questions, and made one speech (May 4, 1860). The questions were unimportant. The speech was characteristic. It was in effect an appeal for information about the government of the Papal States. No Catholic, said Sir John Acton, would defend bad government because it was exercised in the name of the Pope. In this case the evidence was contradictory, and all he wanted was the truth. Lord John Russell was unable to give a satisfactory reply, because

the Queen had no accredited representative at Rome. Macaulay's description of the Papal States a few years before this time is well known. If, he said, you met a man who was neither a priest nor a soldier, and who did not beg, you might be pretty sure that he was a foreigner. Sir John Acton, though he deprecated hasty judgments, was incapable of defending oppression or injustice. The fact that it was the work of Catholics, so far from prejudicing him in its favour, would simply have increased the severity of his condemnation. It would, in his eyes, have been falling from a higher standard.

The two political questions to which Sir John Acton attached most importance were ecclesiastical establishments and agrarian reform. The land laws were safe from disturbance under a Premier who flippantly remarked that tenant right was landlord wrong. The Irish Church, to which, as a Catholic and an Irish Member, Acton could not be indifferent, suddenly flashed into fatal prominence, when, on the 28th of March 1865, Mr. Gladstone declared that it did not fulfil its proper functions, because it ministered only to one-eighth, or one-ninth, of the community. This speech, coupled with his declaration of the previous year that every man not mentally or morally disqualified was on the face of it entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution, gave Mr. Gladstone for the first time the confidence of the working classes and of the Radical party. Sir John Acton went with him, then and afterwards, in all confidence and hope. As a Catholic he would naturally have been opposed to the maintenance of Protestant ascendency by law. As a Liberal he was in favour of extending the suffrage, and of religious equality. But indeed the foundation of his agreement with Mr. Gladstone lay deeper than any political principle or measure. Belonging to two different branches of the Christian Church, they both

desired the reunion of Christendom, and both held that religion was the guiding star in public as in private life. Between a High Churchman like Mr. Gladstone and a Liberal Catholic like Sir John Acton there was plenty of common ground. Both men became, in every sense of the word, more Liberal as they grew older, and Acton's belief in his leader ripened into a reverential devotion which nothing could shake.

At the General Election of 1865, Sir John Acton stood in the Whig or Liberal interest for Bridgnorth, the nearest town to Aldenham, and then a Parliamentary borough. "On that occasion he assured the electors that he represented not the body but the spirit of the Church of Rome" (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, pp. 375–76). What the electors made of this assurance we do not know, and it would be vain to conjecture. They placed him, however, at the head of the poll. But his majority was a single vote, which disappeared on a scrutiny, and he never again took his seat on the green benches of the House of Commons. He had none of the gifts required for winning large popular constituencies, even if his creed had not been a fatal objection in the mind of the average voter five-and-thirty years ago.

While Sir John Acton sat in the House and silently voted with his party, he had not been inactive. The views of the most cultivated and enlightened among English Catholics were expressed in the fifties by a monthly periodical called the *Rambler*. The editor of the *Rambler* was the greatest of converts, John Henry Newman. In 1859 an article of Newman's on consulting the laity in matters of doctrine was condemned by authority at Rome, and Newman withdrew from the editorial chair. He was succeeded by Sir John Acton, and no better choice could have been made. He edited the *Rambler* till 1862, when it became merged in the *Home and Foreign Review*. His first contribution,

in November 1859, was a criticism of Mill on Liberty, which he took up again in the following March. The subject was peculiarly his own, though he could not, as a Catholic, approach it from Mill's point of view. He wrote, contrary to his custom, in the first person singular, and signed the article "A"; which, in his own review, amounted to acknowledgment. "By liberty," wrote this Liberal Catholic, "I mean absence of accountability to any *temporal* authority," and he added, "I make no reservations." He afterwards learned that liberty was positive, and that spiritual as well as temporal authority might be pushed to a point inconsistent with freedom. These youthful contributions to his favourite theme show rather the wonderful knowledge which he had acquired at five-and-twenty than the delicate and subtle discrimination which distinguishes his later work. One exquisite quotation deserves to be quoted again. *Cui Christus vim intulit?* wrote Count Boniface to St. Augustine. *Quem coegit?* To whom did Christ apply violence? Whom did he coerce? The final failure of persecution was in Sir John Acton's opinion the act of Louis the Fourteenth when he revoked the Edict of Nantes. "Coercion," he added, "is an educational instrument which Western Europe has outgrown," though indeed it had not much success in the age of the Cæsars. On the Inquisition he was discreetly silent. But he concluded with a plea for the sacredness of moral responsibility, which hardly came within the scope of Mill's eloquent and powerful treatise. For a Catholic organ, however, the treatment of Mill is, if not sympathetic, at least appreciative and respectful. Of this article Mr. Gladstone wrote to the author, "I have read your valuable and remarkable paper. Its principles and politics I embrace; its research and wealth of knowledge I admire; and its whole atmosphere, if I may so speak, is that which I desire to breathe. It is a truly English paper."

Among Sir John Acton's other contributions to the *Rambler* one of the most interesting is his account of Cavour, which appeared in July 1861, just after the Italian statesman's death. Acton had an abhorrence of Carlylean hero-worship, and he did less than justice to Cavour's regeneration of Italy. His criticism of a man who for many years of his too brief life was engrossed in a desperate struggle for national independence is cold and dry. He cannot conceal either the scanty resources which Cavour had at his disposal, or the magnitude of the results which those resources were made to achieve. But, true to his favourite subject, he analysed the Minister's conception of liberty, and found it wanting. It was liberty for the State, not liberty for the individual, nor for the Church. Yet Cavour's cherished ideal was "a free Church in a free State," and he would probably have replied that from the purely individual point of view Piedmont might well challenge comparison with the Austrian provinces of Italy or the States of the Church. If Cavour's life had been spared, we may be sure that he would, as his dying words about Naples imply, have governed in accordance with the principles of constitutional freedom. A year later, in July 1862, Acton inaugurated the *Home and Foreign Review* with a characteristic article on "Nationality." He traced the rise of national sentiment in Europe to the infamous partition of Poland, of which Burke said that no wise or honest man could approve. It was fostered by the French Revolution, and became afterwards the instrument by which Napoleon fell. The Holy Alliance suppressed it for a time, but it soon revived in Italy. By Nationalism, which Englishmen forty years ago favoured everywhere except in Ireland, Acton meant, as he explains, "the complete and consistent theory that the State and the nation must be coextensive." "Exile is the nursery of nationality," he proceeds, "as oppression is the school of liberalism;

and Mazzini conceived the idea of Young Italy when he was a refugee at Marseilles." To the idea of Nationalism, as he defines it, Acton opposed the principle that "the combination of different nations in one State is as necessary a condition of civilised life as the combination of men in society." To overcome national differences was the mission of the Church, and patriotism was in political life what faith was in religion. There could be no nationality with any claim upon men's allegiance except what was formed by the State. "The Swiss are ethnologically either French, Italian, or German; but no nationality has the slightest claim upon them, except the purely political nationality of Switzerland." The instance was well chosen. Unfortunately Acton goes on to say that "the citizens of Florence and of Naples have no political community with each other," which had ceased to be true before the article appeared. Nor was it altogether a fortunate prediction that no organised State could be formed in Mexico, which after the departure of the French became a stable Republic. Paradoxical as the essay in some respects was, it is valuable as an analysis of political ideas, and its concluding sentence is full of suggestion even to minds which do not accept the opinions implied. "Although," so it runs, "the theory of nationality is more absurd and more criminal than the theory of Socialism, it has an important mission in the world, and marks the final conflict, and therefore the end, of two forces which are the worst enemies of civil freedom—the absolute monarchy and the revolution."

There is nothing in Sir John Acton's essay on "Nationality" which would be likely to excite suspicion at the Court of Rome. But the *Home and Foreign Review* was known to be a Liberal as well as a Catholic organ. It was marked by independence of tone, as well as by originality of thought, and it soon fell under suspicion. Even its motto, *Seu vetus est verum diligo sive*

novum, "I love the truth, whether it be old or new," was ambiguous. For how can Catholic truth be new? In the month of August 1862, Cardinal Wiseman, the acknowledged head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, received an address from his clergy. His reply contained a severe censure of the *Home and Foreign Review* for the "absence of all reserve or reverence in its treatment of persons or of things deemed sacred, its grazing even the very edges of the most perilous abysses of error, and its habitual preference of uncatholic to Catholic instincts, tendencies, and motives." The particular charge of personal misrepresentation against which the Cardinal protested has long since lost whatever interest it may once have had. The general tone of Acton's remonstrance, made in his editorial character and in the periodical condemned, illustrates his attitude towards the Church to which he belonged. Of Wiseman he writes not merely with the reverence due to his ecclesiastical rank, but with the affection of an old pupil at Oscott. "In the Cardinal's support and approbation of our work," he says, "we should recognise an aid more valuable to the cause we are engaged in than the utmost support which could be afforded to us by any other person." He then proceeds to describe the foundation of the *Review*. "That foundation is a humble faith in the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church, a devotion to her cause which controls every other interest, and an attachment to her authority which no other influence can supplant. If in anything published by us a passage can be found which is contrary to that doctrine, incompatible with that devotion, or disrespectful to that authority, we sincerely retract and lament it. No such passage was ever consciously admitted into the pages either of the late *Rambler* or of the *Review*." The aim of literature and the function of the journalist are declared to be on a lower level than the work and duty of the Church,

though directed to the same ends as hers. "The political and intellectual orders remain permanently distinct from the spiritual. They follow their own ends, they obey their own laws, and in doing so they support the cause of religion by the discovery of truth and the upholding of right." These manly and sensible words are followed by a still more eloquent and significant passage, which expresses the deepest convictions of Acton's mind. "A political law or a scientific truth may be perilous to the morals or the faith of individuals; but it cannot on this ground be resisted by the Church. . . . A discovery may be made in science which will shake the faith of thousands; yet religion cannot regret it or object to it. The difference in this respect between a true and a false religion is, that one judges all things by the standard of their truth, the other by the touchstone of its own interests. A false religion fears the progress of all truth; a true religion seeks and recognises truth wherever it can be found."

When Acton wrote thus, the Darwinian controversy was at its height, and many Protestants, who thought that they believed in the right of private judgment, showed much less tolerance than he. Against the timid faith which feared the light, against the false morality which would do evil that good might come, Acton waged incessant war. Truth, morality, and justice could not in his eyes be inconsistent with the doctrines of the Church. If they appeared to be so, it must be because the doctrines were erroneously expressed or imperfectly understood. To identify the Church with a cause, with a party, with anything lower than morality and religion, was a betrayal of duty and a surrender of the fortress. The policy of the *Home and Foreign Review*, as expounded by the editor, was to leave the domains of faith and ecclesiastical government alone, but on all other matters to seek the highest attainable certainty. The progress of political right

and scientific knowledge, the development of freedom in the state and of truth in literature, were its objects. Here for the time the quarrel rested. It is not to be supposed that Pius the Ninth and his advisers were satisfied with this lucid and pungent exposition of Liberal principles. But Wiseman had learned from experience that the interests of Catholicism in England were not promoted by a policy of aggression, and he was aware that Sir John Acton spoke for most of those Catholics who did not belong to the extreme or Ultramontane school. For nearly two years Sir John remained editor of the *Home and Foreign Review*. Then the final thunderbolt was launched by a higher power than Wiseman. At the Congress of Munich in 1863 Acton's friend and teacher, Professor Döllinger, delivered an eloquent plea for the union of Christendom, lamenting the want of dogmatic standards among Protestants, and at the same time urging Catholics "to replace the mediæval analytical method by the principle of historical development, and to encounter scientific error with scientific weapons" (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, page 513). Sir John Acton attended this congress, and reported its proceedings to his *Review*. In March 1864 the Pope addressed a brief to the Archbishop of Munich, in which he declared that the opinions of Catholic writers were subject to the authority of the Roman congregations. After this Acton felt that it was useless to continue the struggle, or to carry on the *Home and Foreign Review*. In a farewell article, entitled "Conflicts with Rome," he explained that he was equally unable to admit the doctrines of the brief or to dispute the authority which proclaimed them. In these circumstances he had only one course to take. He could not abandon principles he sincerely held. He could not reject the judgment of the Holy See without committing the sin of apostasy. "The principles had not ceased to be true, nor the authority to be legitimate, because the two were in contradiction."

He could only sacrifice the *Home and Foreign Review*. He regretted its discontinuance, because, while there were plenty of magazines to represent science apart from religion, and religion apart from science, it had been his special object to exhibit the two in union. But he had no alternative, if he were to preserve his intellectual honesty and also his loyalty to the Church.

It would have been difficult to emerge with more credit from a peculiarly painful and delicate position. The article, and with it the last number of the *Review*, appeared in April 1864, when Sir John Acton was thirty years of age. The surpassing prudence which accompanied him from boyhood through life had no connection with weakness nor timidity. It resulted from a very rare faculty of apprehending all aspects of a question at once, and of keeping them separate in his mind. In this same year 1864 Acton told one of his parliamentary friends, now Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, that he had never felt the slightest doubt about any dogma of the Catholic, meaning the Roman Catholic, Church. A time was to come when his faith would be more severely tried. But, independent as he had always been, Acton was not formed by nature to be a leader of revolts. Moral or intellectual anarchy was the last thing he desired. If he had been brought up a Protestant, he would probably have remained one. In that case, however, he would have seen the danger of private interpretation even more clearly than the perils of dogmatic despotism. He would have asked, if, as Bishop Butler says, we must judge of revelation itself by reason, whose reason it was to be.

At the close of the year 1864, the tenth anniversary of the date on which he had himself proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin as a dogma, the Pope issued his Encyclical Letter against modern thought. In the Syllabus of Errors which this epistle condemned, Pius the Ninth, who had once been reckoned a

Liberal, included the heresy that the Holy See ought to seek reconciliation with progress, with Liberalism, and with modern thought. He further pronounced that the Catholic religion should be the exclusive religion of the State; and that liberty of worship, and freedom of the Press, promoted moral corruption and religious indifference. There was, he added, no hope for the eternal salvation of those who did not belong to the true Church. Although Sir John Acton had had some share in provoking the publication of the Syllabus, he made no reply. He had withdrawn from the controversy without surrendering either his faith as a Catholic or his principles as a man.

In 1865 Acton's connection with the House of Commons ceased, and in the same year he married a Bavarian lady, the eldest daughter of Count Arco-Valley. From this time too he abandoned the practice of regular editing and reviewing, nor did he write again for avowedly Catholic organs, though he was throughout the remainder of his life an occasional contributor to secular organs on historical and theological subjects. The popular idea that he wrote little, and passed his whole time in reading or talking, is erroneous. That he did not put out much in his own name is true. But the list of his anonymous articles fills more than twenty pages of an octavo volume, and their variety is quite as remarkable as their number. He read every new German book of the smallest importance. In the *Home and Foreign Review* alone there are more than seventy critical notices from his pen. The pen, however, was not the only instrument by which he imparted to others some fragments from his vast stores of knowledge. To his neighbours, one can hardly call them his constituents, in the little town of Bridgnorth, he delivered several lectures, now out of print and scarce, which for range and quality must have been very different from

anything his audience had heard before. The first, delivered on the 18th of January 1866, when he was still supposed to be Member for the borough, is now only to be found in the *Bridgnorth Journal* for the 20th. Its subject is "The Civil War in America: Its Place in History." Nothing can be more characteristic than the tone and temper of this discourse. Though dated only a few months after the fall of Richmond, when, as Acton says in one of these letters, he "broke his heart over the surrender of Lee," it is as calm and judicial, not to say as dry, as if he were investigating an antiquarian problem. Its dryness never becomes dulness. Unless, however, the Literary and Scientific Institution of Bridgnorth was far above the ordinary level of such bodies, they must have been puzzled and perplexed by the paradoxical subtlety which traced the causes of the war back to the birth of the American Constitution. "Slavery," he said, "was not the cause of secession, but the reason of its failure." Then what was the cause of secession? According to Sir John Acton, it was the failure of Jefferson, Hamilton, and their colleagues to provide against the omnipotence of the majority, which he regarded as inconsistent with true freedom. They might have answered, if they could have been heard, that they had made the method of choosing a President indirect, and had given the Supreme Court control even over Congress itself. The first expedient had, no doubt, entirely failed, and the electoral college was a mere machine for registering the popular vote. But the Supreme Court was a substantial reality, and it had before the war decided that a fugitive slave could be reclaimed by his master even in a free State. Nobody will now dispute Sir John Acton's proposition that by the middle of the nineteenth century slavery was an anachronism. Yet, if the Southern States had been more instead of less numerous than the Northern,

they would have probably won, and they would then undoubtedly have set up a great Slave Power in the heart of western civilisation. The immediate, or proximate, cause of hostilities was not slavery, but the claim of South Carolina to secede from the Union. Not till the third year of the war did Lincoln proclaim the abolition of slavery. Yet without slavery there would have been no war. If not the *causa causans*, it was the *causa sine quâ non*. The value of Sir John Acton's lecture lies chiefly in the ability with which he dissects the American Constitution, and indicates, sometimes in the words of its authors, its weak points. Whatever may be thought of his constructive faculty, his critical acumen was not surpassed by any of his less learned contemporaries.

In 1867, and the early part of 1868, Sir John Acton wrote regularly for the *Chronicle*, a weekly paper of high repute during its brief existence, contributing a narrative of current events in Italy during the period of Mentana and the second French occupation of Rome. On the 10th of March 1868 he lectured again at Bridgnorth on the Rise and Fall of the Mexican Empire.[1] This is in my opinion the best popular lecture that Acton ever gave, and I do not know where I could lay my hands on a better. It is clear, spirited, eloquent, and so perfectly well arranged that the whole story of Louis Napoleon's Mexican Expedition, with its plausible pretext, and its miserable failure, was told, not meagrely but completely, in the compass of an hour. The joint intervention of England, France, and Spain in the affairs of Mexico did not last long. Its object, like the object of the Anglo-German intervention in Venezuela, was to obtain redress for injuries to European residents, and payment of debts

[1] I owe the opportunity of reading and quoting from this lecture, reported in the *Bridgnorth Journal* of the 14th, to the kindness of Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff.

due to subjects of the three Powers. England and Spain soon discovered that the French Emperor had quite other designs, being minded to substitute a Mexican Empire for the Mexican Republic. Sir John Acton explained why in his opinion, which has not been justified by experience, Mexico was unable to stand alone. "A society so constituted could not make a nation. There was no middle class, no impulse to industry, no common civilisation, no public spirit, no sense of patriotism. The Indians were not suffered to acquire wealth or knowledge, and every class was kept in ignorance and in rigorous exclusion; when therefore the Mexicans made themselves independent, the difficulty was to throw off not the bondage but the nonage in which they had been held, and to overcome the mental incapacity, the want of enterprise, the want of combination among themselves, and of the enlightenment which comes from intercourse with other nations. They formed a Republic after the model of their more fortunate neighbours, and accepted those principles which are so inflexible in their consequences, and so unrelenting in their consistency." Between the Mexican Republic and the Republic of the United States there is no doubt all the difference between Alexander the Coppersmith and Alexander the Great. But Benito Juarez was both a better and an abler man than Acton gave him credit for being, and his successor, Porfirio Diaz, proved himself to be a most efficient ruler. A Civil War in Mexico, simultaneous with Civil War in the United States, gave Napoleon the opportunity he wanted. The one furnished a pretext, the other removed a barrier, and it was not till long after the Austrian Archduke Maximilian had been put upon his pinchbeck throne that President Johnson was in a position to order the French troops out of the American Continent. The poor Archduke himself, basely deserted by the unscrupulous potentate who had sent him to his

doom, showed a chivalrous honour and an unselfish courage that fully justify Acton's description of him as "almost the noblest of his race." The lecture describes the pathetic isolation of Maximilian in a passage of singular power. "There was nothing for him to look forward to in Europe. No public career was open to the man who had failed so signally in an enterprise of his own seeking. His position in Austria, which had been difficult before, would be intolerable now. He had quarrelled with his family, with his Church, and with the protector to whose temptations he had hearkened. And for him there was to be no more the happiness of the domestic hearth.[1] In Mexico there were no hopes to live for, but there was still a cause in which it would be glorious to die. There were friends whom he could not leave to perish in expiation of measures which had been his work. He knew what the vengeance of the victors would be. He knew that those who had been most faithful to him would be most surely slaughtered; and he deemed that he, who had never been seen on a field of battle, had no right to fly without fighting. Probably he felt that when a monarch cannot preserve his throne, nothing becomes him better than to make his grave beneath its ruins." Sir John Acton closed his lecture with the expression of a hope that the United States would not undertake the government of Mexico. "A confederacy," he observed, "loses its true character when it rules over dependencies; and a democracy lives a threatened life that admits millions of a strange and inferior race which it can neither assimilate nor absorb." The warning was unneeded, for the days of American Imperialism were not yet. But the words have a perennial wisdom which the new owners of the Philippines might find it worth their while to consider.

Sir John Acton stood again for Bridgnorth, this

[1] His wife had become insane on the failure of her mission to France.

time unsuccessfully, at the General Election of November, 1868. His personal friend and political leader, Mr. Gladstone, became Prime Minister in December of the same year, and his first legislative work was the disestablishment of the Irish Church. With this policy Sir John Acton, not as a Catholic, but as a Liberal, was in full and complete sympathy. He regarded it as "no isolated fact, but an indication of a change which is beginning to affect all the nations of Christendom, and bears witness to the consciousness that political obligation is determined, not by arbitrary maxims of expediency, but by definite and consistent principles." "The political connection," he added, that is, the Liberal party, "which, in spite of many errors and shortcomings, has been identified with the development of our constitutional liberties, and with the advance of science in our legislation, has entered on a new phase of its existence. And it follows a wise and resolute leader, at whose call the nation has arisen, for the first time in history, to the full height of its imperial vocation" (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, p. 516).

Although, as has been said, Acton held that the two great political questions of the time were first the relations of the Church with the State, and secondly, the reform of the Land Laws, events were impending which affected him for a time far more deeply than either. Believing, as he did, that "the full exposition of truth is the great object for which the existence of mankind is prolonged on earth," he could not allow the Papal Syllabus to deter him from following truth with all the knowledge and ability he could command. The *Chronicle*, for which he had written so often, came to an end in 1868. But the same editor, Mr. Wetherell, took over next year the *North British Review*, to which Acton contributed a learned essay on the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, marshalling the facts in favour of

the theory that the murder of the Huguenots had been premeditated at Rome. Researches such as these, and the consequences which they involved, were not congenial to the Vatican, nor to the personally amiable, dogmatically unbending Pontiff who was still under the protection of foreign bayonets. But to no one was Acton's freedom of speculation and inquiry more repugnant than to the able and ambitious prelate who had succeeded Wiseman as Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. Dr. Manning was at that time a rigid supporter of extreme Ultramontane doctrine, and of authority as opposed to freedom in opinion. With the ardent zeal of a convert, and a convert, as his recent appointment (1865) showed, much in favour at Rome, he strove to suppress the religious independence of the English Catholics. But an historical controversy with Acton was a serious affair. It resembled nothing so much as going in for a public examination with a reasonable certainty of being plucked, and that prospect did not smile upon dignified ecclesiastics impressed with a due sense of their own importance. Moreover, Manning was already absorbed in a policy which would put down moral and intellectual rebellion in the Church of Rome once for all.

So early as the 8th of December 1867 the Pope had signed a Bull, convening the whole episcopate of his Church to an Œcumenical Council at Rome in the same month of 1869. Although it was not officially stated, it was perfectly well known, that the object of the Council was to proclaim the infallibility of the still Sovereign Pontiff. A famous book, emanating from Munich, "The Pope and the Council," by "Janus," which from the Catholic point of view combated the doctrine of Infallibility, received appreciative notice from Lord Acton in the *North British Review*. This magazine, though short-lived, and never very widely circulated, appealed more successfully than any of its

contemporaries to the lettered and learned class. Some of its articles, such as the essays of Thomas Hill Green, the Hegelian philosopher of Balliol, occupy a permanent place in the literature of metaphysics. The article on "The Pope and the Council" was therefore sure to be read by those who, by voice or pen, exercise an influence over the minds of others. The reviewer did not mince his words. He pointed out to the bishops that they had already committed themselves to a very grave extent. In 1854 they had allowed the Pope to proclaim a new dogma, the Immaculate Conception. In 1862 nearly all of them had pronounced in favour of the temporal power. In 1864 they accepted the Syllabus. In 1867 they expressed their willingness to believe whatever the Pope might teach them. "Janus" had passed lightly over the Council of Trent, the subject of a work by Fra Paolo Sarpi which Macaulay considered second only in historical value to the books of Thucydides. Lord Acton, who had much in common with Fra Paolo, expressed his own view with unmistakable energy and force. "The Council of Trent," he said, "impressed on the Church the stamp of an intolerant age, and perpetuated by its decrees the spirit of an austere immorality." It should be the object of the forthcoming Council to reform, to remodel, and to adapt the work which had been done at Trent.

What actually happened was very different from that which Acton desired, though not very different from what he expected. Sir John went to Rome some time before the opening of the Council, full of interest in the result, and full of sympathy with the distinguished minority who were prepared to resist the forging of fresh chains upon their freedom. Among this minority the most conspicuous was Monseigneur Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, whose tragic death at the hands of the Commune encircled his name with the halo of a martyr and a saint. "The Archbishop of

Paris," wrote Acton, "had taken no hostile step in reference to the Council, but he was feared the most of all the men expected at Rome. The Pope had refused to make him a Cardinal, and had written to him a letter of reproof, such as has seldom been received by a bishop. It was felt that he was hostile, not episodically to a single measure, but to the peculiar spirit of this pontificate. He had none of the conventional prejudices and assumed antipathy which are congenial to the hierarchical mind. He was without pathos or affectation, and he had good sense, a perfect temper, and an intolerable wit" (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, page 521). By the end of December 1869 Darboy had exacted a promise that the dogma of Infallibility would not be proclaimed by acclamation, so as to take the majority by surprise. Lord Acton wrote frequent reports of the Council and its proceedings, chiefly to Mr. Gladstone and Professor Döllinger, some of which were afterwards collected and published as the "Letters of Quirinus" in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Lord Acton considered that the cause of the minority was lost when, on the 24th of April 1870, the Council adopted the Supplement to the First Decree. This was to the effect that the judgments of the Holy See must be observed, even when they proscribe opinions not actually heretical. Lord Acton's comment upon this vote of the episcopal majority does not lack incisiveness. "They might," he wrote, "conceivably contrive to bind and limit dogmatic infallibility with conditions so stringent as to evade many of the objections taken from the examples of history; but in requiring submission to Papal decrees on matters not articles of faith, they were approving that of which they knew the character; they were confirming, without let or question, a power they saw in daily exercise; they were investing with new authority the existing bulls, and giving unqualified sanction to the inquisitor and the index, to the murder

of heretics and the deposing of kings. They approved what they were called on to reform, and blessed with their lips what their hearts knew to be accursed."

A private letter to Mr. Gladstone, written a month before the first meeting of the Council, shows how gloomy were Lord Acton's apprehensions. "Everything," he says, "is prepared here for the production of Papal infallibility, and the plan of operations is already laid down in a way which shows an attentive study of Sarpi's 'History of the Council of Trent.' They are sure of a large majority." A majority, however, would scarcely do. Œcumenical Councils, if not absolutely unanimous, are supposed to attain that moral unanimity which the insignificance of a minority implies. The attitude of the French, and still more of the German and Austro-Hungarian bishops, inspired the Vatican with some alarm. Darboy and Dupanloup were names known and esteemed throughout the Catholic world. Bishops Strossmayer and Hefele, the latter a man of prodigious learning, were still more strongly opposed to the Papal policy than their French colleagues. Against the expediency of promulgating the doctrine there was a resolute and well-organised mass of opinion in the Council. There were few prepared to call the doctrine itself false, and therefore ready to resist it in the last extremity. To drive a wedge between the majority of the minority and the minority of the minority was the obvious tactics of the Pope and his Ultramontane advisers. "If the Court of Rome is defeated," Lord Acton wrote, "it can only be by men of principle and of science." He believed that a letter from Mr. Gladstone, dealing with the secular side of the question, and with the effect which the decree would have upon the future of English and Irish Catholics, might do much to counteract the influence of Manning. It was impossible for the English Premier to interfere directly with the

affairs of another Church. But he allowed Lord Acton to state what he thought about the effects of Ultramontanism on the prospects of educational measures in England. Lord Acton estimated that the bishops opposed to the expediency of the dogma were about two hundred in number, while only as many score would vote against its truth.

No sooner did the Council meet than regulations were issued which gave the Pope the sole right of making decrees and defining dogmas. To this the Council submitted. "The sole legislative authority," Lord Acton wrote on the 1st of January 1870, "has been abandoned to the Pope. It includes the right of issuing dogmatic decrees, and involves the possession of all the Infallibility which the Church claims." "We have to meet," he added, "an organised conspiracy to establish a power which would be the most formidable enemy of liberty as well as science throughout the world. It can only be met and defeated through the Episcopate, and the Episcopate is exceedingly helpless." So it proved. But Lord Acton, besides helping the minority with the resources of his knowledge and the power of his logic, endeavoured to invoke the secular arm. He was sanguine enough to hope that, as the Pope had anathematised modern civilisation and progress, the governments of Catholic and even of Protestant countries would take some steps in self-defence. The opposition in the Council, he held, was "almost sure to prevail if it were supported, and almost sure to be crushed if it were not." The change of Ministry in France at the beginning of 1870, and the substitution of M. Ollivier for M. Rouher, alarmed the Vatican, although the French ambassador, the Marquis de Banneville, declared that there would be no change of policy. De Banneville was wrong. The new French Government announced that if the dogma were carried the French troops would be recalled, although Cardinal Antonelli assured Count Daru,

the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the Council was purely theological, and had nothing to do with secular affairs. The threat, however, had no effect. The Pope had gone too far to recede, and the forces of the opposition became daily weaker. There was no hope, and no future, for those bishops who set themselves against the majority of their colleagues and the head of their Church. Except in France, they could not look for the protection of the Government, and the French Emperor was a bruised reed. "Two days ago," wrote Lord Acton on the 16th of February, "a definite message was sent by the Emperor to Cardinal Antonelli, in which the Emperor declared that he could not afford to have a schism in France, where all the *employé* class, all the literary class, and even the Faubourg St. Germain are against the Infallibility of the Pope. He added that it would dissolve all the engagements existing between France and Rome." But Antonelli, a remarkably shrewd specimen of the Italian diplomatist, calculated that if the bishops yielded, the rest of the practising Catholics would follow them. In another passage of the same most interesting letter Lord Acton says that the *Schema de Ecclesiâ*, already adopted by the Council, "makes civil legislation on all points of contract, marriage, education, clerical universities, mortmain, even on many questions of taxation and common law, subject to the legislation of the Church, which would simply be the arbitrary will of the Pope. Most assuredly no man accepting such a code could be a loyal subject, or fit for the enjoyment of political privileges. In this sense the French bishops have written to the French Government, and that is what they ask me to write to you." How deep an impression this letter made upon Mr. Gladstone's mind became apparent when, a few years afterwards, he entered into controversy with the Church of Rome. Strange as it may seem, these Gallican prelates appealed through Lord Acton to the Government

of the Queen, seeing "no human remedy for this peril other than the intervention of the Powers." But the British Government could not have acted, even in concert with France, unless they had been prepared to face a storm of indignation, Protestant as well as Catholic, which no British interest required them to encounter.

After the decree of Infallibility had been produced, the German prelates made an important protest against bishops without sees, chiefly Roman Monsignori, being allowed to vote, and also complained, in words furnished by Lord Acton himself, that the claim to enact dogmas by a majority endangered the freedom, as well as the universality, of the Council. But "the minority were in great confusion and uncertainty, and disposed to rely on external help." That help they never received. Lord Acton put the danger as strongly as he could. Catholics, he declared, would "at once become irredeemable enemies of civil and religious liberty. They would have to profess a false system of morality, and to repudiate literary and scientific sincerity. They would be as dangerous to civil society in the school as in the State." But between Catholics who held that with such matters it would be profane for any Protestant to meddle, and Protestants who rejoiced that now at last the Catholics were coming out in their true colours, the Cabinet, if they had taken Lord Acton's advice, would have had an uneasy, and barely defensible, position. So what Acton calls "this insane enterprise" of conferring upon the Pope an unconditional and unlimited infallibility was suffered to proceed without any political remonstrance from England. Mr. Odo Russell, afterwards Lord Ampthill, Lord John's nephew, was instructed to keep the Foreign Office informed of what happened at the Council, but his information was much less copious than Lord Acton's. He was not instructed to do anything more, and officially he was a member of the Legation at Florence. While other governments

did nothing, the Italian Government, in Lord Acton's opinion, made matters worse. Their measures of what he called confiscation against the property of the Church would, he thought, prevent some Italian bishops from voting in the minority who would otherwise have been disposed to do so. Yet, if Lord Acton were right in his description of the Papal policy, he could hardly have been surprised that Liberal governments in Catholic countries should regard the Church as an enemy.

On the 15th of March 1870, a curious protest was presented to the Council by some bishops of the United Kingdom. The substance of it is thus described by Lord Acton: "They state that the English and Irish Catholics obtained their emancipation, and the full privileges of citizenship, by solemn and repeated declarations that their religion did not teach the dogma now proposed; that these declarations made by the bishops, and permitted by Rome, are, in fact, the conditions under which Catholics are allowed to sit in Parliament, and to hold offices of trust and responsibility under the Crown; and that they cannot be forgotten or overlooked by us without dishonour." Lord Acton complained bitterly of France because she maintained the temporal power of the Pope, and excluded Italians from their national capital, by her troops, while yet she would not attempt to restrain him from abusing the jurisdiction she enabled him to exercise. "The religious houses are suppressed, the schools of divinity reduced, the priesthood almost starved, because France is determined to keep the Pope on his despotic throne. It is a policy which degrades the Italian Government in the eyes of the nation, nurses the revolutionary passion, and hinders the independence of the country, and which can no longer be defended on the score of religious liberty. The French Protectorate has become as odious to Catholicism as to the

Italian State, and it is about to prove as pernicious to other countries as it is to Italy." When a division was taken on the dogma of Infallibility, 451 bishops voted with the Pope, 88 against him, and 62 for further inquiry. Then the minority gave up the struggle, and when, on the 18th of July, three days after the declaration of war between France and Germany, the principle was formally defined, only two bishops resisted the acclamation of 533. A few weeks later the French troops left Rome, and the temporal power was at an end.

Such was the miserably futile result of the Opposition led by Darboy, Dupanloup, Rauscher, Schwartzenberg, Kenrick, Conolly, Hefele, and Strossmayer. They were borne down by the dead weight of numbers, and the traditional authority of the Holy See. Catholics were offered the choice of submission or excommunication. The official head of the English Catholics, Manning, was among the most zealous supporters of the Papacy. Newman deeply deplored, but humbly submitted. So even did Strossmayer, the brave and eloquent Croat, who had been shouted down at the Council in violent and abusive language when he denied that Protestantism was the source of Atheism, and pleaded for the old Catholic rule of unanimity. Döllinger, challenged by the Archbishop of Munich to accept the decree, refused, and was cut off, like Spinoza, to his eternal honour, from the congregation of the faithful. Lord Acton, on the other hand, the stay and support of the minority throughout the Council and before it, was not molested, perhaps because he was a layman, perhaps because he was a peer.

While he was at Rome, in November 1869, Acton had received from Mr. Gladstone, and accepted, the offer of a barony. For a young man of thirty-five this was a great and most unusual distinction. It was

made all the greater by the fact that his name occurred in the first list of such recommendations submitted by the Prime Minister to the Queen. At that time the general public hardly knew Sir John Acton's name. But he had all the usual qualifications for a peerage, except wealth, being connected with the aristocracy by birth and marriage, the head of an old English family, and the inheritor of an old English baronetcy, who had gained six years' political experience in the House of Commons. "His character," Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Queen, "is of the first order, and he is one of the most learned and accomplished, though one of the most modest and unassuming, men of the day" (Morley's "Life of Gladstone," ii. 430). No praise could be better deserved, or expressed with more studious moderation. Lord Acton pursued in the House of Lords the same silent course that he had adopted in the House of Commons. He remained, unlike many peers of Mr. Gladstone's creation, faithful to the Liberal party, at that time, and for so many years afterwards, led by his step-father, Lord Granville.

Lord Acton was made an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Munich in 1872, the last year of the *North British Review*, after which he ceased to write regularly for the Press. In 1873 a very different honour was in contemplation. He had been consulted by Lord Granville upon the European situation, then regarded as critical, and showed such remarkable knowledge of it that the idea of sending him as Ambassador to Berlin was seriously entertained (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 404, page 528). The appointment would in many ways have been desirable, and in some unexceptionable. For Lord Acton was a born diplomatist, and, though the German Emperor was a Protestant, half the empire was Catholic. But the prize was apparently thought too high for a man outside the diplomatic service who had filled no

other post under the Crown. Lord Acton remained at home, and in 1874 found himself suddenly once again in the thick of a theological battle. The echoes of the Vatican Council, and of Papal pretensions, seemed to have died away, when, in November 1874, Mr. Gladstone, freed from the trammels of office, and regarding his leadership of the Liberal party as near its close, startled the world by a pamphlet on "The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance." He had previously, in an article on "Ritualism," contributed to the *Contemporary Review*, expressed his opinion that Romanising in the Church of England was least to be feared at a moment "when Rome had substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith; when she had refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one could become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another; and when she had equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history." While in this frame of mind, Mr. Gladstone paid a visit to Munich, and had many long talks with the venerable Professor Döllinger. The spectacle of a man so wise, pious, learned, and holy under the ban of the Church seems to have kindled in him a burning indignation against the authors of the Vatican decrees. He wrote a pamphlet, and informed Lord Acton from Hawarden in October that he meant to publish it. Lord Acton deprecated this step. He was far nearer to Mr. Gladstone in opinion than he was to the Court of Rome. But he had no desire to see the subject reopened, knowing that the withdrawal of the decrees was impossible, and fearing that public opinion might be dangerously excited against his fellow-Catholics by so powerful an onslaught. He did not sufficiently allow for the great progress in the direction of tolerance made since the passing of the Ecclesiastical

Titles Act, which Mr. Gladstone himself had repealed three years before. The pamphlet appeared in November 1874, and more than a hundred thousand copies of it were sold. The English Catholics were disturbed. Some were indignant, and some were alarmed. But in the end they were none the worse. On the contrary, Mr. Gladstone did them a service by giving them an opportunity to declare that they were, and always would be, as loyal and patriotic as their Protestant countrymen. It is impossible not to trace in Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, as in the passage already cited from the *Contemporary Review*, the effect of Lord Acton's letters from Rome in 1870. The substance of the argument is that the Catholics obtained emancipation by denying that Papal infallibility was a dogma of their Church, and that the Power which had changed their faith might change their allegiance. The Vatican decrees reversed the policy of Clement the Fourteenth, who, by overthrowing the supremacy of the Jesuits, had "levelled in the dust the deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty had ever known." Equality of civil rights should be maintained without regard for religious differences. But Mr. Gladstone thought himself entitled to ask the Catholics of England and Ireland whether they would assist in the re-erection of the temporal power by force. Many were the answers to this famous pamphlet. The most eloquent was Newman's. The most hostile was Manning's. The most interesting was Acton's. It is characteristic of Lord Acton's courage and candour that he should have answered at all. He was regarded at Rome with something more than suspicion, and nobody quite understood why he had escaped the fate of Döllinger. There was nothing that Mr. Gladstone could say of the decrees too strongly condemnatory to command his assent. But his invincible integrity of mind would not allow him, for the sake of his own peace, to acquiesce in the practical conclusions

which Mr. Gladstone drew from irrefragable premises. In several letters written for the *Times*, one of them addressed personally to Mr. Gladstone, Lord Acton gave the only reply which could in the circumstances be given. Mr. Gladstone's reasoning was unassailable in argument. But man is not a logical animal. People are sometimes better than their principles, sometimes worse, very seldom consistent. As Mr. Gladstone himself had said a few years before, "The limit of possible variation between character and opinion—aye, between character and belief—is widening and will widen." Lord Acton, with all his subtlety and all his learning, could only take refuge in the old and familiar truth that what a man will do cannot be inferred from what he believes. The *Corpus Juris*, he said (*Times*, November 9, 1874), makes the murder of Protestants lawful. Pius the Fifth justified the assassination of Elizabeth. Gregory the Thirteenth condoned, or rather applauded, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew (*Times*, November 24). Was it therefore fair to assume that all Catholics who accepted the Vatican decrees, or even all Ultramontanes, were potential murderers? "Communion with Rome," he said at the same time, "is dearer to me than life." He concluded his letters in dignified and moving sentences, which made a deep and just impression upon Catholics and Protestants alike. "It would be well if men had never fallen into the temptation of suppressing truth and encouraging error for the better security of religion. Our Church stands, and our faith should stand, not on the virtues of men, but on the surer ground of an institution and a guidance that are divine. I should dishonour and betray the Church if I entertained a suspicion that the evidence of religion could be weakened or the authority of councils sapped by a knowledge of the facts with which I have been dealing, or of others which are not less grievous or less certain because they remain untold." It was not to be supposed that

this language would give satisfaction to the dominant party in the Church of Rome, which had already been much tried by Lord Acton's energy behind the scenes during the Vatican Council. An apology which was more injurious than the attack added fuel to the flames. "If I am excommunicated," he wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Aldenham on the 19th of December 1874, "I should rather say when I am." Yet he was not. He satisfied his bishop, Browne of Shrewsbury, that he was dogmatically sound, and that it would have been inconsistent with his argument to attack the Vatican decrees. He had indeed accepted them as the foundation of his case. What he wanted to show was that neither the Jesuits nor the Inquisition, neither false doctrines nor bad Popes, had made Catholics indifferent to the moral law. Manning, now a Cardinal, was not so easily contented as Bishop Browne, or as Bishop Clifford, who also absolved Lord Acton. His haughty and commanding temper had been stimulated by promotion, and by the favour of the Pope. It was one of his most cherished aims to humble the pride of the old Catholic families, and make them feel the discipline of the Church. He wrote three letters to Lord Acton, and received, it need scarcely be said, the most courteous replies, which left him as wise as he was before. But he went no further, and the correspondence was never published. Manning was not without prudence, and he shrank from proceeding to extremities with a man whose intellect was as keen as his, and whose knowledge was vastly superior. It would not have cost Lord Acton much research to produce a summary account of the Inquisition, or a biographical sketch of selected Popes, which would have done more to prove the soundness of his position than to edify the Christian world. The new cardinal, if he had indulged in an historical controversy with "Quirinus," might have emerged from it with less credit to himself than amusement to the learned society of Europe. For

these, or for other reasons, he concluded to leave Lord Acton alone.

Henceforth, Lord Acton abandoned theological polemics, and devoted himself to his true life, the life of a student. He loved truth too much to love controversy for its own sake, and he was conscious that, though he had escaped penalties, orthodox Catholics would not receive his arguments without prejudice. Mr. Gladstone wrote another pamphlet, in which, while maintaining his own position, he accepted the loyal assurances of the Catholics as sincere, and with that the controversy ceased. But in June 1876 Lord Acton wrote him a private letter, which contains the clearest statement of his own opinion upon Ultramontanism and Ultramontanes. "I have tried in vain," he wrote, "to reconcile myself to your opinion that Ultramontanism really exists as a definite and genuine system of religious faith, providing its own solutions of ethical and metaphysical problems, and satisfying the conscience and the intellect of conscientious and intelligent men. It has never been my fortune to meet with an esoteric Ultramontane—I mean, putting aside the ignorant mass, and those who are incapable of reasoning, that I do not know of a religious and educated Catholic who really believes that the See of Rome is a safe guide to salvation. . . . In short, I do not believe there are Catholics who, sincerely and intelligently, believe that Rome is right and that Döllinger is wrong. And therefore I think you are too hard on Ultramontanes, or too gentle with Ultramontanism. You say, for instance, that it promotes untruthfulness. I don't think that is fair. It not only promotes, it inculcates, distinct mendacity and deceitfulness. In certain cases it is made a duty to lie. But those who teach this doctrine do not become habitual liars in other things."

With this plain and straightforward language we may leave Lord Acton as a theologian, and pass to

other aspects of his busy life. His great work should have been, and was intended to be, a History of Liberty. For that purpose his library at Aldenham was collected, and to frame different definitions of liberty was one of his favourite pastimes. He loved liberty with all the ardour of Milton, and investigated it with all the science of Locke. Even Liberalism, which may be thought an inferior thing, was with him "the beginning of real religion, a condition of interior Catholicism" (Acton to Gladstone, March 22, 1891). This History was never written, nor even begun. All that there is of it, all that there ever was of it, except books and notes, materials for others to use, consists of two lectures delivered at Bridgnorth in the year 1877. One was called "The History of Freedom in Antiquity," and the other "The History of Freedom in Christianity." These lectures are exceedingly rare, and the only copies I have seen are in the British Museum. If the audience listened to them with pleasure, and absorbed them with ease, they had intellects of unusual calibre, and employed them to the best advantage. Read carefully and at leisure, they are full of suggestion and of insight. Their fault is that, in homely phrase, they pour a quart of liquor into a pint pot. They are so much crowded with names and references, that to follow the chief thread of the argument is made needlessly hard. "It would be easy," the Bridgnorth Institute was told, "to point out a paragraph in St. Augustine, or a sentence of Grotius, that outweighs in influence the Acts of fifty Parliaments; and our case owes more to Cicero and Seneca, to Vinet and Tocqueville, than to the laws of Lycurgus, or the five codes of France." The sentence and the paragraph should have been pointed out. Something should have been said, if not about Vinet and Tocqueville, at least about Cicero and Seneca. A geographer may have too many names in his map, and a learned man may condense his knowledge until it has

no meaning for those who know less than himself. But, on the other hand, these lectures contain passages at once lucid and worth their weight in gold, which could only have come from a mind at once acute, meditative, and well stored. Such, for instance, is the declaration, "By liberty I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion." "Liberty," proceeds the lecturer, "is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end. . . . A generous spirit prefers that his country should be poor, and weak, and of no account, but free, rather than powerful, prosperous, and enslaved. It is better to be the citizen of a humble commonwealth in the Alps than a subject of the superb autocracy that overshadows half of Asia and of Europe." This will seem a hard saying to many, and it is indeed far removed from the sensual idolatry of mere size that vulgarises modern Imperialism. But it was with Lord Acton a fundamental principle, and it is not the size of Periclean Athens, or of Elizabethan England, which made them imperishably great. "It is bad to be oppressed by a minority, but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority." Worse, because more desperate, with less hope of rebellion, or escape. We must look, Lord Acton warns us, to substance and essence, not to form and outward show. The martyrdom of Socrates was the act of a free Republic, and it was Cæsar who liberated Rome from the tyranny of Republican institutions. The fault of the classical State was that it tried to be Church and State in one, and thus infringed upon individualism by regulating religion. The three things wanting in ancient liberty were representative government, emancipation of slaves, and freedom of conscience. In Christian times Thomas Aquinas anticipated the theory of the Whig Revolution. The worst enemy of freedom in modern times was that mock hero of sham greatness,

Louis Quatorze. The only known forms of liberty are Republics and Constitutional Monarchies. "It was from America that the plain ideas that men ought to mind their own business, and that the nation is responsible to Heaven for the acts of the State, ideas long locked in the breast of solitary thinkers and hidden away in Latin folios, burst forth like a conqueror upon the world they were destined to transform under the title of the Rights of Man." Ever since his visit to America in the days of President Pierce, if not before, Acton had made a special study of the American Constitution in its strength and its weakness, in the amplitude of its safeguards, and in its fatal want of elasticity. A Monarchy cannot be too constitutional. But a too constitutional Republic is a difficult machine to work. England, said a French critic, is a Republic with an hereditary President: the United States are a Monarchy with an elected King.

From this time forward Lord Acton wrote less, and read, if possible, more. Dr. Shaw's careful Bibliography, my obligations to which I have already acknowledged, contains nothing between 1877 and 1885 except a review of Sir Erskine May's "Democracy in Europe" for the *Quarterly* of January 1878. Sir Erskine May, the well-known Clerk of the House, was a pleasant and popular writer, who dealt largely in generalisations, and sometimes condescended to platitudes. He was an earnest Liberal, though his office imposed some restraint upon his opinions, and it is creditable to the impartiality of the late Sir William Smith that he should have allowed a Liberal critic to deal with a Liberal author in the traditional organ of Conservatism. He certainly had his reward. For it would be difficult to find in the *Quarterly Review* from the days of Gifford and Southey to our own an article of more fascinating interest and more solid value than this masterly essay, which its author never took the trouble to republish.

Notwithstanding Lord Acton's minute and conscientious accuracy in points of detail, he is always best and most characteristic in broad, luminous inferences from large masses of history and long periods of time. He contented himself on this occasion with a few civil remarks about the public servant who made so industrious a use of his leisure, and devoted the rest of his space, which was far too small, to a comparison or contrast of democracy with freedom. He showed that for eleven hundred years, from the first Constantine to the last, the Christian Empire was as despotic as the pagan; that it was Gregory the Seventh who made the Papacy independent of the empire; that Luther bequeathed as his political testament the doctrines of Divine right and passive obedience; and that Spanish Jesuits, in arguing against the title of Henry the Fourth to the throne of France, had anticipated the doctrines of Milton, Locke, and Rousseau. Passing on, with the ease of a man at home in all periods of history, to the dynastic change of 1688, he described the Whig settlement not as a Venetian oligarchy, but as an aristocracy of freeholders, while from the American rebellion of the following century he drew the moral that a revolution with very little provocation may be just, and a democracy of very large dimensions may be safe. The defect in the principles of 1789 was that they exalted equality at the expense of liberty, and subjected the free will of the individual to the unbridled power of the State.

After 1879 Lord Acton ceased to live at his country house in Shropshire, dividing the months when he was not in London between Germany and the Riviera. Besides his great Library at Aldenham, there was a smaller but complete library in each of his three houses. He usually spent the winter at Cannes, and the autumn in Bavaria, at Tegernsee, which belonged to the family of his wife. This

cosmopolitan existence was by no means uncongenial to him, and, correspondence apart, he was not cut off from his English friends. Cannes in the season is as much English as French, and when Lord Acton was in London he made the best use of his time. The hours he spent in reading were so disposed that he could enjoy at the close of the day the sort of society he liked best. He was a member of Grillions, and of The Club. He knew almost everybody worth knowing, and no one so fond of study was ever more sociable. But, as these letters show, the man whom above all others he esteemed and revered was Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone, with characteristic humility, always deferred to Lord Acton's judgment in matters historical. On the other hand, Lord Acton, the most hypercritical of men, and the precise opposite of a hero-worshipper, an iconoclast if ever there was one, regarded Mr. Gladstone as the first of English statesmen, living or dead. The reason for this opinion will be found in the following pages. The opinion itself is not the less important because Lord Acton was in many respects cautious to a fault, and had little of the enthusiasm which sustained his idol. Except Döllinger, "the glory of Catholic learning," as Mr. Bryce well calls him, there was no other contemporary for whom Lord Acton felt unqualified reverence. Mere oratory had not much effect upon him, even if it were John Bright's or the Duke of Argyll's. Admiring, as he could not but admire, the charm and power of Newman's style, he considered Newman himself to be a "sophist, the manipulator, and not the servant, of truth." Knowing Mr. Gladstone from the inside, as few outside his own family knew him, he felt his simplicity as well as his greatness, and realised that he had no object except to learn what was true, and to do what was right. In politics there was no difference between the two men, unless it were that Lord Acton could never

quite forgive Mr. Gladstone's eulogistic tribute to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield. Even in religion that which divided them was small indeed when compared with that which united them. Lord Acton was as staunch a believer in religious liberty as any Protestant, and no Catholic could desire more fervently the reunion of Christendom. In politics, as I have said, the sympathy was complete. Unlike most Catholics, Acton had been in favour of Italian independence, so dear to Mr. Gladstone's heart. He had always belonged to the school of Liberals who put the rights of the individual above the claims of the State, and he had as little liking for Socialism as Mr. Gladstone himself. He held in utter detestation the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield, and that temper of mind which goes by the cant term of "Jingoism." No one rejoiced more heartily over the Liberal victory of 1880, or attributed it more exclusively to Mr. Gladstone. No one worked harder to keep him at the head of the Liberal party, and no one can have foreseen more clearly the disastrous consequences of his final retirement. Perhaps the nearest approach to a schism between Lord Acton and his political chief was that each had a favourite novelist, and that neither would acknowledge the transcendent merits of the rival. Lord Acton was unjust to Scott. Mr. Gladstone underrated George Eliot. Lord Acton's estimate of George Eliot may be found in some of the ensuing letters, and in the *Nineteenth Century* for March 1885. This article, one of the most elaborate Lord Acton ever wrote, was translated into German, and, so far as the general public were concerned, might as well have appeared in that language at first. It is an extreme and provoking instance of the writer's passion for condensation, reference, and innuendo. It is well worth the trouble of reading, although fiction is not the province in which Lord Acton's opinion was most

valuable. But the trouble is due to congested sentences, and might easily have been spared.

When in 1886 Mr. Gladstone made his great attempt to settle the Irish question by Home Rule, Lord Acton gave him a zealous and cordial support. Although, as we have seen, he was far from holding the doctrine of nationality in an unqualified form, he had grasped for many years with increasing strength the conviction that Ireland could be orderly and peaceably governed by Irishmen alone. So far back as October 1881, when the Liberal Government and the Land League were in open hostility, and Mr. Parnell was arrested under the Coercion Act, he wrote, "The treatment of Home Rule as an idea conceivably reasonable (in the speech at Leeds) which was repeated at the Guildhall, delighted me." There were not many readers besides Lord Acton who discerned at that time the trend of Mr. Gladstone's ideas. But a very few months later, in February 1882, Mr. Gladstone, speaking on the Address, used language of a much more significant kind, to Lord Acton's great delight. "I have long wished," he wrote on the 20th of February, "for that declaration about self-government. . . . The occasion last week gave extraordinary weight to the words. . . . The risk is that he may seem to underrate the gravity of a great constitutional change in the introduction of a federal element." Lord Acton, it will be observed, much as he desired the change, did not ignore its risks, or even its perils. When the decisive moment came, which Mr. Morley has described with so much eloquence and power ("Life of Gladstone," vol. iii. pp. 311–12), Lord Acton sounded a note of warning in the midst of his felicitations. "From the point of view of the ages," he wrote on the 18th of March 1886, "it is the sublime crown of his work, and there is a moral grandeur about it which will, I hope, strengthen and console him under any amount of difficulty, and even disaster." It was

this faculty of seeing the case against his own most deeply cherished principles and predilections which made Lord Acton so valuable a friend and counsellor to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone's splendid enthusiasm, and indomitable optimism, sometimes led him to ignore obstacles against which he might have provided. Acton, whose temperament was critical, as his mind was judicial, pointed out, with the sincerity of true friendship, though with unfailing tact, the clouds above, and the rocks ahead. No man admired Mr. Gladstone more. No man flattered him less.

The following letter to Mrs. Drew expresses his opinion at the time, and also the judgment of a distinguished Italian statesman who was always friendly to England:—

"Your letter comes in the midst of the living echoes of the speech, and of the uncertainty that follows, and does not quite relieve my feeling of apprehension. Rome is not a good place for accurate news, and I hope for more letters at Cannes in a couple of days. My old friend, Minghetti, is sinking under an incurable illness. The other night, when several people were attacking me about the Irish Bill, he said, very solemnly and in his best Italian: 'The one will be happy even if he fails, and the other will repent even of his success.' The other was Bismarck. Next morning came Herbert's letter saying that he feels that for himself the best thing would be defeat.

"I hope that there is not any real inconsistency in my language or in my thoughts at this crisis. I am more decidedly in favour of the principle of the measure than anybody; and there can hardly be one among your father's friends who urged it more decidedly, though some followed more or less contentedly. The Bill is better than I sometimes expected it to be, on one or

two important points. It is not only right in my eyes, but glorious as the summit of his career, and if I was on the spot I should be the warmest and the most convinced of its supporters.

"But what makes it more admirable to me is that the stimulus is not hope but duty; that it is very much more clearly dictated by principle than by expediency, that the supreme motive is not strongly sustained by sordid calculation. I do not see a real likelihood of its succeeding in this Session, and I am not sanguine about success in Ireland.

"Arguments founded on the presumed good qualities of the Irish do not go very far with me, and I am ready to find the vices of the national character incurable. Especially in a country where religion does not work, ultimately, in favour of morality; therefore I am not hopeful, and it is with a mind prepared for failure and even disaster that I persist in urging the measure."

His adhesion to the cause, though it had no weight with the mass of electors, who did not know his name, had a deep meaning of another kind. When many men of the lettered, scientific, and learned classes left the Liberal party rather than vote for Home Rule, one of the few English names that enjoyed a European reputation did something to counterbalance others which were paraded so often that they seemed indefinitely numerous.

Lord Acton, however, did not come forward as a popular champion of Home Rule, for which he could have furnished a host of historic precedents. In the sphere of action he was too apt to distrust himself. The House of Lords was not favourable for the purpose, and he never appeared on public platforms. He was more congenially occupied in founding the *English Historical Review*, of which the late Bishop Creighton, then Professor of Ecclesiastical History at

Cambridge, was the first editor. In 1887 he criticised, not without severity, the third and fourth volumes of the editor's great work on the Papacy. Some editors might have demurred to the insertion of the article. But Creighton was far above all petty and personal feelings of that or any kind. Among the other books noticed by Acton in the *Historical Review* were Seeley's "Life of Napoleon," Bright's "History of England" (by the Master of University), and Bryce's "American Commonwealth." Academic honours were now coming in rapid succession. In 1888 Lord Acton was made an Honorary Doctor of Laws at Cambridge, in 1889 a Doctor of Civil Law at Oxford, and in 1890 an Honorary Fellow of All Souls, thereby becoming Mr. Gladstone's colleague. For a man who had published scarcely anything in his own name these compliments were as rare as they were just.

When Mr. Gladstone formed his final Administration in 1892, Lord Acton was appointed a Lord-in-Waiting to the Queen. This may seem a singular method of rewarding literary merit. But the circumstances were peculiar. Lord Acton was desirous of showing his devotion to the Prime Minister, and his belief in the cause of Home Rule. His Parliamentary career had not been distinguished enough for more purely political office, and I am told by those who understand such matters that the lowness of his rank in the Peerage precluded him from a higher place in the Household. The incongruity, however, though Lord Acton felt it himself, was not quite so great as it looked. Besides their month's attendance at the Court, the Lords-in-Waiting are sometimes employed to represent public departments in the House of Peers, and Lord Acton represented the Irish Office for the Chief Secretary, Mr. Morley. In that character he showed, when occasion came, that his

long silence in Parliament had not been due to incapacity for public speaking. At Windsor he was agreeable to the Queen from his German tastes and sympathies, not to mention the fact that he could speak German as fluently as English. Every moment of leisure during his "wait" there was spent in the Castle library. Yet the position was an unnatural one, and Lord Acton soon became anxious to escape from it. His thoughts turned to his favourite Bavaria, and he humbly suggested the Legation at Stuttgart as a possible sphere.

But something infinitely better than any political or diplomatic post remained for this born student and truly learned man. In 1895, just a year after Mr. Gladstone's resignation, Sir John Seeley, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, departed this life. The Chair was in the gift of the Crown, that is, of the Prime Minister, and Lord Rosebery appointed Lord Acton. The appointment was singularly felicitous, and the opportunity came in the nick of time. For the Liberal Government was tottering to its fall, and Lord Salisbury was not wont to overlook the claims of political supporters. Lord Rosebery's choice was bold and unexpected. But it was more than successful; it was triumphant. Lord Acton was of the same age as his predecessor, and it is a dangerous thing for a man to begin the business of teaching at sixty. An academic Board would not have had the courage to appoint Lord Acton. They would have dreaded his want of experience. The advantage of retaining a connection of this kind with the State is that a Minister, rising above the purely academic point of view, will sometimes overlook or ignore technical disqualifications in favour of learning or genius. Even Cambridge herself was at first a little startled by the nomination of this famous, but rather mysterious stranger. Lord Acton had to make his own way, and he was not long in making it. The opening

sentences of his Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History put him at once on good terms with his audience, and through his audience with the University. "I look back to-day," he said (June 11, 1895), "to a time before the middle of the century, when I was reading at Edinburgh, and fervently wishing to come to this University. At three Colleges I applied for admission, and, as things then were, I was refused by all. Here, from the first, I vainly fixed my hopes, and here, in a happier hour, after five-and-forty years, they are at last fulfilled." It is probable that the happiest hours of Lord Acton's life were spent at Cambridge. As the writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, so often quoted, says, "He loved Cambridge from his soul; loved the grounds and the trees, the buildings and the romance of the old colleges, the treasures of the libraries, the intercourse with scholars." In his first lecture he tried to find some point of agreement with Seeley. But their views of History were fundamentally different. To Seeley, History was purely political. In Lord Acton's view it included social and intellectual movements neither propelled nor impeded by the State. Lord Acton reckoned Modern History as beginning with the close of the fifteenth century, "when Columbus subverted the notions of the world, and reversed the conditions of production, wealth, and power; Machiavelli released Government from the restraint of law; Erasmus diverted the current of ancient learning from profane into Christian channels; Luther broke the chain of authority and tradition at the strongest link; and Copernicus erected an invincible power that set for ever the mark of progress upon the time that was to come." That "history is the true demonstration of religion" was one of the maxims which Lord Acton impressed upon his pupils at the first opportunity. But perhaps the most characteristic feature of the discourse is his insistence upon the necessity of keeping

up the moral standard. Better, he exclaimed, err, if at all, on the side of rigour. For "if we lower our standard in history, we cannot uphold it in Church or State." When this brilliant and fascinating lecture came to be published, it was unfortunately encumbered by more than a hundred notes, all quotations, many of which merely expressed Lord Acton's meaning in language less forcible than his own. "As if," says Macaulay of some pointless reference to a Greek play by a Shakespearean commentator, "as if only Shakespeare and Euripides knew that mothers loved their children." Lord Acton was rather too apt to think that an expression of opinion, like a statement of fact, required an authority to support it.

Even under the stimulus of Cambridge Lord Acton did not work quickly. During the five years of his active professorship he only delivered two courses of lectures. The first was on the French Revolution. The second was on Modern History as a whole. He would naturally and by preference have begun with the more general subject. But the exigencies of the Tripos, or of the Curriculum, prevailed, and the thoroughbred animal was put, not for the first time in this world, into the harness of a hack. Lord Acton's lectures were, as they were bound to be, crowded. But they were only a small part of what he did for Cambridge. An Honorary Fellow of Trinity, he received graduate or undergraduate visitors with equal courtesy and kindness at his rooms in Nevill's Court. To them, and to any one who could appreciate it, he would always readily impart the knowledge he had spent his life in acquiring. He was not merely a willing answerer of questions, and a generous lender of books. He had boxes full of the notes he had made since boyhood, each box appropriated to its peculiar subject, and these notes were at the disposal of all historical

students who could make a proper use of them. His pupils were, as Mr. Bryce puts it, "awed by the majesty of his learning." "When Lord Acton answers a question put to him," said one of them, "I feel as if I were looking at a pyramid. I see the point of it clear and sharp, but I see also the vast subjacent mass of solid knowledge."[1]

The following letter from Dr. Henry Jackson, Fellow of Trinity, for which my warmest thanks are due to the distinguished writer, will be interesting to all who desire to know more of Lord Acton's Cambridge life :—

"You ask me for information about Acton's life and work at Cambridge. I am not competent to write anything systematic about either the one or the other; but it is a pleasure to me to put down some of my recollections and impressions, and I shall be glad if my jottings are of any use to you.

"When Seeley died in 1895, my first thought was—'If they are good to us, they will send us Acton;' but I hardly hoped that he would be thought of, and I did not expect that, if he had the offer, he would accept it. So the news of his appointment was to me a very joyful surprise. When he came, he appeared heartily to like his new surroundings—his rooms at Trinity, the collegiate life, the informal conversation, his lectures, his pupils, and the University library. Quietly but keenly observant of men and things, he was very soon completely at home in the University, with which, as he related in his inaugural lecture, he had wished to connect himself forty years before.

"In hall, in combination-room, and where men smoked and talked, he took an unobtrusive but effective part in conversation. His utterances, always terse and epigrammatic, were sometimes a little oracular:

[1] "Studies in Contemporary Biography," 398.

'I suppose, Lord Acton,' said some one interrogatively, 'that So-and-so's book is a very good one?' 'Yes,' was the reply; 'perhaps five per cent. less good than the public thinks it.' But a casual question not seldom drew from him an acute comment, an interesting reminiscence, or a significant fact. 'When was London in the greatest danger?' asked some one rather vaguely. 'In 1803,' was the immediate answer, 'when Fulton proposed to put the French army across the Channel in steamboats, and Napoleon rejected the scheme.'

"Others will tell you of his influence upon the historical studies of the University, of his help given freely to teachers and to learners, and of his judgment and skill in planning and distributing the sections and the subsections of the 'Modern History,' which he did not live to edit. He was an active member of the committee which recommends books for purchase by the University Library. But, in general, he shunned the routine of business. Even at the Library Syndicate, though he followed the proceedings attentively, he seldom or never took part in discussion or voted. Indeed, I thought that I noticed in him a paradox which extended beyond the limits of academic affairs. On the one hand, he was observant of everything, and he made up his mind about everything. On the other hand, except where supreme principles—Truth, Right, Toleration, Freedom—were in question, he was cautious and reserved in the expression of opinion, and he always preferred to leave action to others.

"Like other specialists, I found that my own study had not escaped his attention. He had a good general knowledge of the work done by modern students of ancient philosophy, and his criticisms of them showed a sound, clear, and independent judgment. One or two trifling incidents seemed to me significant. The first time that he came to my rooms, looking quickly along

a bookshelf, he soliloquised: 'I never knew that Bonitz had translated the *Metaphysics*.' It surprised me, not that Acton did not know of the posthumous publication of this work, but that he expected to remember all that a specialist in Greek philosophy had written. On another occasion he was talking of German professors—first of professors of history, afterwards of others. He could tell us about all: he had heard many. At last it occurred to me to ask him about a forgotten scholar who had written a treatise about Socrates. The book was in no way important, but it had given me a very agreeable impression of the writer's personality. I found that Acton had known the man, had attended his lectures, and could testify to the personal attraction which I had surmised.

"When Acton died, writers of obituary notices appeared to regard him as one who, while he devoured books and accumulated facts, passed no judgments, framed no generalisations, and cherished no enthusiasms; and I fancied that Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, in his very interesting letter to the *Spectator*, unconsciously encouraged this misapprehension. Nothing could well be further from the truth. To me it seemed that Acton never read of an action without appraising its significance and morality, never learnt a fact without fitting it into its environment, and never studied a life or a period without considering its effect upon the progress of humanity.

"His judgments were severe but just. Neither glamour of reputation nor splendour of achievement blinded him to moral iniquity. He had a wealth of righteous indignation which upon occasion blazed out fiercely. 'Are you aware,' he once asked, 'that Borromeo was a party to a scheme of assassinations?' 'But,' said some one, 'must we not make allowance for the morality of the time?' 'I make *no* allowance for that sort of thing,' was the emphatic answer; and

the contrast with the measured and sedate tones of Acton's ordinary utterance made the explosion all the more impressive.

"This righteous indignation carried with it a corresponding appreciation of anything good. I remember well how he told me the supplement to the old story of the Copenhagen signal—that Parker made it with the expressed intention of relieving Nelson from responsibility, but in the confident expectation that, if skill and daring could do anything, Nelson would disobey. Acton could admire Parker's magnanimity as well as Nelson's genius.

"It would be presumption in me to say anything about Acton's historical attainments; but I may note one or two peculiarities which I noticed in his attitude to the study. History, as he conceived it, included in its scope all forms of human activity; so that scholars whom others would describe as theologians or jurists were in his eyes great departmental historians. This, I thought, was the explanation of his miscellaneous reading; for he was always methodical, never desultory.

"But despite this width of view, he did not grudge the expenditure of time and trouble upon details. On the contrary, he would not only ransack archives, but also interrogate those who had witnessed, or been concerned in, great events. Of course he minutely scrutinised and scrupulously weighed the testimony thus obtained; but when once he was satisfied of the accuracy of his information, he was prepared to use it for the interpretation and explanation of documentary evidence.

"Acton could never have written anything which was not literature of a high order—dignified, incisive, vigorous; and yet history was to him, not literature, but political philosophy; not an interesting narrative, but a scientific study of cause and effect. He had,

however, no faith in political forecasts about anything more than the immediate future.

"It is impossible not to regret that Acton has not made his mark in literature as the writer of a great book, or in politics as a great statesman; but he preferred to *know*, and the men who know as Acton knew are few. The world is the richer whilst they are with us, and the poorer when they go. Acton will not be forgotten at Cambridge."

A brilliant and penetrating judgment of Lord Acton's services to Cambridge was paid in the *Cambridge Review* a few months after his death (October 16, 1902) by Professor Maitland, who had been associated with him in preparing the "Cambridge History" as a Syndic of the Press. Himself one of the most learned men in the University, Mr. Maitland was amazed by the extent of Lord Acton's range. "If," he writes, with a laudable wish to avoid extravagance, "we recall the giants of a past time, their wondrous memories, their encyclopædic knowledge, we must remember also how much that Lord Acton knew was for them practically unknowable." His reading was not for amusement. His daily consumption of a German octavo meant mastery of the book, with copious notes in a neat handwriting on slips of paper, which were always, like his books, at the disposal of his pupils. He "toiled," as Professor Maitland says, "in the archives, hunting the little fact that makes the difference." He was "deeply convinced that the history of religion lies near the heart of all history," while it was his fate to be suspected by Catholics as a Liberal, and by Liberals as a Catholic. "This man," I again quote the Professor, "who has been called a miser was in truth a very spendthrift of his hard-earned treasure, and ready to give away in half-an-hour the substance of an unwritten book." Some writers, especially bad writers, do not shine in conversation, because

they are keeping their best things for the public. Lord Acton would pour out to a sympathetic listener the most recondite history, or, on a different occasion, the spiciest gossip, if that were the commodity in demand. So far as knowledge and power went, and if time had served, Professor Maitland is convinced that Lord Acton could himself have written all the twelve volumes of the "Cambridge History." The "History" is his best memorial. Another memorial is the famous Aldenham Library, bought by Mr. Carnegie, and presented by Mr. Morley to the University of Cambridge.

The article which I have ventured to associate with the name of Professor Maitland is signed "F. W. M.," a signature which the writer would not have adopted if he had desired to preserve his anonymity. The authorship of a letter signed "H. J.," and written from Cambridge, which appeared almost simultaneously in the *Daily News*, is not more difficult to identify. "H. J.'s" words are a memorable and eloquent protest against the ignorant fancy that Lord Acton spent his life in the mere accumulation of learning. The exact opposite, as he says, was the truth. Lord Acton "was no mere Dryasdust: he was a watchful observer of men and affairs. If he studied the detail of history, it was in order that he might the better elicit its significance and its teaching. He was slow to express an opinion; but in his judgments there was never any indecision. In the advocacy of intellectual freedom he was eager: in the denunciation of tyranny and persecution he was at a white heat. He was a man who loved to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good." Every one who knew Lord Acton, or at least every one who could appreciate him, must recognise the justice and fidelity of this eloquent tribute. But it was at Cambridge that he put forth to the utmost the whole power of his mind. It was at Cambridge that he showed most clearly how his whole

life had been devoted to the cause of freedom and of truth. It was there that he planned the "Cambridge History" in twelve volumes, of which two, the first and the seventh, have already appeared. Unhappily they were posthumous. Lord Acton did not live to see them, nor to write the Introduction. At the age of sixty-seven he was suddenly struck down by paralysis, and, after lingering for more than a year, died at Tegernsee on the 19th of June 1902. He was "buried by the side of the daughter whose deathbed he had comforted with the words, 'Be glad, my child, you will soon be with Jesus Christ.'"[1] Such through life and in death was his simple faith.

The lustre which Lord Acton's name reflected upon Cambridge was not felt more deeply, or more sincerely, than the higher standard of learning which he introduced into a learned professoriate. He was the one man in England, if not in Europe, who could have brought with him from the outside an equal knowledge of books and of the world. Cambridge saw his weak side quickly enough. The keen-witted men who enjoyed and appreciated his talk, or watched him listening with an attention that nothing escaped, could understand why Döllinger predicted that if he did not write a great book before he was forty he would never write one at all. As a matter of fact he did not write a book of any kind, small or great. He did not even, as he once thought of doing, republish his Essays. His contemplated Life of Döllinger dwindled into an article of forty pages on Döllinger's Historical Work for the *English Historical Review*.

But the article, which appeared in October 1890, shows Lord Acton at his best. His affectionate reverence for his great master gives a colour and animation to his style, which it often lacked. This is by far the most readable of all his essays, and by no means

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, 404, page 534.

the least instructive. Döllinger was in some respects like himself. "Everybody felt that he knew too much to write," and the best part of his erudition was given to his pupils at Munich. In tracing the course of Döllinger's studies, and of his mental development, Lord Acton wrote the best, because the most characteristic, biography of the Old Catholic leader. Besides the interest of the subject itself, Lord Acton contrived to bring into this wonderful summary a number of judgments on other things and persons as vivid as they are acute. Freeman rather horrified him by preferring printed books to manuscripts as material for history. But then he "mixed his colours with brains." Lord Acton was inclined to think Stahl, the philosophical and Conservative statesman of Prussia, "the greatest man born of a Jewish mother since Titus." Döllinger, however, considered that this was unjust to Disraeli, and most Englishmen will probably agree with him in opinion.

Whether Lord Acton ought to have left the Church of Rome when Döllinger was excommunicated, or when the Vatican decrees were pronounced, is a question which it would not become a Protestant to ask, much less to answer. He did not shrink from the risk of speaking out, and it was not his fault that he escaped. No earthly reward or peril would have induced him to say what he did not think, or to profess what he did not believe. The truths which all Christians hold in common, and the moral principles to which Sophocles ascribes an unknown antiquity, guided him in history as in life. His emphatic statement that he had never felt any doubt about any Roman doctrine was made some years before 1870, and the secession of the Old Catholics, which failed for want of an Episcopate. In 1878 Pio Nono died, and was succeeded by a more liberal Pontiff. Manning lost his influence at Rome, Newman was made a cardinal, and the Broad Churchmen

in the Roman communion were tolerated, if not encouraged. Even Lord Acton's old enemy, Manning, turned from theological controversy to movements of social philanthropy, to Irish politics, in which he agreed with Acton, and to good works among the poor. The strictest of Roman Catholics were not sorry to think that the most learned Prelates of the Anglican Church were less learned than a Catholic layman. The more a man knew, the larger was his idea of Lord Acton's knowledge. But for the years between 1895 and 1900 that knowledge would have been comparatively wasted. It would have profited only a few readers here and there beyond the circle of Lord Acton's friends. At Cambridge, the Professor of History was in perpetual contact with fresh minds eager to know, and to transmit what they acquired. He did not altogether understand the Greek mind, for he told Mr. Gladstone that it was unscientific. But he had this much in common with Socrates, the father of science, that he required the clash of dialectic to bring out his full force. When ignorant people laid down the law, Lord Acton smiled, and, it is to be feared, enjoyed himself in an almost sinful degree. When scholars and philosophers conversed with him, they found him often indeed more inclined to listen than to talk, but always appreciative, suggestive, and awakening. To genuine students he was a mine of information, and would give what was asked tenfold. Nobody ever entrapped him into a path which for good reasons he was disposed to avoid. Attempt to draw him into controversy, and he became cautious, subtle, enigmatic. But every one who came to him, as his Cambridge pupils came, for assistance and instruction, went away not merely satisfied and enlightened, but moved and touched by the profundity of his knowledge, the generosity of his temper, and the humility of his soul.

Mary Gladstone.
Herbert Gladstone. Mr Gladstone. Mrs Gladstone. Dr Dollinger. Lord Acton.

Group at Tegernsee, 1879.

LETTERS OF LORD ACTON

1879
Munich
Oct. 31

You were threatened with a long letter from me, about people at Paris, but I could not finish it. . . . and so I lost the only days on which Paris information could be

Scene at Tyconderoga, 1813.

LETTERS OF LORD ACTON

1879
Mentone
Oct. 31

You were threatened with a long letter from me, about people at Paris, but I could not finish it, . . . and so I lost the only days on which Paris information could be of any use. After a week of care, varied by pleasant visits from Lacaita, F. Leveson, and H. Cowper, we started, and rested at Milan and Genoa, and yet were nearly the first arrivals here. We expect to have the Granvilles for neighbours at Cannes, as well as Westminsters.

Let me first of all transcribe a passage from my unsent letter: "If you see Madame Waddington you will find her a very pleasant specimen of American womanhood. Her husband wants the qualities that charm and win at first, and I suppose he will not hold his own long. He has no dash, no *entrain*, no personal ascendency, like the men who succeed in France; but there is not a deeper scholar, or a more sincere and straightforward Christian in the country." I see from your letter that the unfavourable part of my remarks came true more than the praise. Something may be due to awkwardness connected with the Ferry[1] Bill. The interview with Scherer consoles me. He is a man of the first order as far as that can be without showy gifts. But he is guarded, cold, unsympathising, and

[1] Jules Ferry, see p. 7.

1879 the intellectual crisis by which he came to repudiate the Christian faith was so conspicuous that he is embarrassed with people who are notable for religious conviction.

I wanted to say so much about Mignet, who was celebrated before your father went up to college; of St. Hilaire, the best Grecian and earliest Republican in France; of Dufaure and Simon, the leaders of the Left Centre, who hold the fate of the Ministry in their hands; of Laboulaye, the political oracle of Waddington, who solves every problem by American principles; of Vielcastel, the most sensible and experienced of Conservatives, and the only surviving Doctrinaire; of Broglie,[1] who has all but ruined the Republic, in order to expiate his former ecclesiastical Liberalism; of Pasquier, who possesses the good qualities in which Broglie is deficient; of Taine, who has almost the solidity of Scherer, and more than his brilliancy. But it is all too late now.

You describe the Professor[2] most justly. Serenity has grown on him with years, although they were years of conflict and of the great grief that men who do not live for themselves can feel for the cause they have lived for. Strength, too, though in less degree, by reason of a vice which besets another great man. From a sense of dignity and of charity he refuses to see all the evil there is in men; and in order that his judgments may be always charitable, generous, and leaning to the safer side, he is not always exact in definitions or rigorous in applying principles. He looks for the root of differences in speculative systems, in defect of knowledge, in everything but moral causes, and if you had remained with us longer you would

[1] Duc de Broglie, statesman and historian (1821–1901). [2] Dr. Döllinger.

have found out that this is a matter on which I am divided from him by a gulf almost too wide for sympathy. 1879

Boutney I never saw. But he is a sound and useful man, who makes it his business to spread political knowledge among those classes that govern France. A cousin of ours lectures, under his auspices, to half-educated Parisians.

"Le Gendre de M. Poirier" at the Français is one of the greatest treats imaginable. Your stay at Paris must have been full of new impressions and experiences, even in its levity.

And now, after a short interval of Victor Hugo at Keble, I fancy you will start for the Midlothian campaign. You were very wrong to suppress that second sheet of your letter, and I hope you will make up for it by letting me know how things go on, and bearing in mind that one learns nothing at Mentone, except the bare outside of public events.

There is so much to ask and say that I have not the courage to begin. I am afraid you will forgive the length neither of my letter nor of my silence, and will be as much bored by the silver of the one as by the golden of the other. But when all the world has its rendezvous in Harley Street, admit me, perdu in the crowd. 1880 *Mentone March 15*

In this out-of-the-way region we have been kept up to the mark in home politics by pleasant visits from Freddy Leveson—a robust Gladstonian—Cowper Temple, who told me more than I knew about the world of spirits; Goschen, who spent several days with us, and whose footsteps are very visible on the road that leads away from the Liberal party, through

1880 Brookes's, to a moderado coalition; Reay, . . . fresh from Midlothian; Mallet,[1] doctrinaire, disputatious and desponding, but abounding in criticism of the policy which he represents. Lord Blachford passed, but I did not see him. Nothing carried me back to England more than the two Italians[2] whom you overheard at Venice, who were here when I was very ill, but who took me over the whole ground traversed since 1842. Bonghi's essays[3] are appearing successively, and they are meant as a lesson for Italians, and break up the career in a way which loses the thread of continuity and the law of its progress and the wealth of the unity therein. But he is exceedingly intelligent and sympathetic, and I hope that he will recast his materials when he puts them together in a volume. When he asked me: Why is Mr. Gladstone so much attached to the Church and so much against establishments? Why is he so generous towards R. Catholics and so hard on the Pope? Why is not Ireland reconciled? Why is not England won?—you will believe that I found my voice again. I don't think the book will ever suit our public, but I should like it to appear in French.

. . . . . .

A certain letter of mine acknowledging the gift of the Lancashire Canvassing Speeches was written between the election and the summons to Windsor, in November 1868.[4] If it leads you to look at the Bristol electioneering speeches mentioned in it, you will be disappointed; for they will seem to you poor in comparison. In reality, they are an epoch in constitutional history. Burke there laid down, for ever, the law of the

[1] Sir Louis. [2] Minghetti and Bonghi. [3] On Mr. Gladstone.
[4] Mr. Gladstone was an unsuccessful candidate for South-West Lancashire in 1868. He was at the same time elected for Greenwich.

relations between members and constituencies, which 1880
is the innermost barrier against the reign of democratic force. Charles Sumner once said to me: "Mr. Burke legislated from those hustings." When you met John Morley at Glasgow he had just written a very good life of Burke. It is impossible not to be struck by the many points of resemblance between Burke and your father—the only two men of that stature in our political history—but I have no idea whether they would have been friends or bitter enemies.

Madame de Staël is the author of that saying about liberty, whom I commemorate in terms studiously excluding rivalry with George Eliot.

Do you remember a question as to the number of words in Shakespeare and in Milton? There is all about it in Brother Mark's[1] "Life of Milton," which is in the same series as Morley's "Burke."

And another, as to the title of the "Imitation"? I find that it is not the title given by the author—so that Milman's very plausible remark falls through.

Plenty of muffs have written in the *Edinbro'*, but I am not one of them.

You see so many interesting and eminent men that you can spare a miss sometimes. But I am sorry for that silent evening near Lowell. The easy brightness of his mind surpasses all I remember in America. I sat next to him at a dinner at Boston twenty-seven years ago, and spoke of the burying, by Constantine, of the Palladium in a vault at Constantinople. Longfellow would not believe my story. I quoted a passage. "Yes," said Lowell, "but the passage we want is the passage into the vault." Somebody questioned whether the statue of Cromwell would stand

[1] The Reverend Mark Pattison, then Rector of Lincoln.

1880 among the sovereigns at Westminster. "At least," said he, "among the half-crowns."

I have never met him since. But if I had been fortunate enough to drop in that evening at Ripon's, I rather think I should have liked to sit next to him. You would have seen the difference between a live dog and a dead lion.

Scherer ought to be much obliged to me for the conversation and for the readers I procured him. He is, I think, one of the three best living writers in France — deeper and more subtle than Taine, and infinitely better versed in political questions than Renan. If you see that arch person you will find his conversation, easy and tripping as it is, very inferior to his writings. There are volumes of essays which I am sure you would read with pleasure. And he has a special bone to pick with the author of "A History of Liberty." [1]

I sent for Seeley,[2] and read him with improvement, with much pleasure, and with more indignation. It is hard in a few crowded lines to explain my meaning on a question so fundamental. The great object, in trying to understand history, political, religious, literary or scientific, is to get behind men and to grasp ideas. Ideas have a radiation and development, an ancestry and posterity of their own, in which men play the part of godfathers and godmothers more than that of legitimate parents. We understand the work and place of Pascal, or Newton, or Montesquieu, or Adam Smith, when we have measured the gap between the state of astronomy, of political economy, &c., before

[1] The book on which Lord Acton was then at work, and for which he amassed vast hoards of material.

[2] "The Expansion of England."

they came and after they were gone. And the progress 1880
of the science is of more use to us than the idiosyncrasy of the man. Let me try to explain myself by an example of to-day. Here is Ferry's article 7.[1] One way of looking at it is to reckon up the passions, the follies, the vengeance of the republicans, to admire or deplore the victory of the Conservatives, to wonder at the Democrats. But beyond the wishes of the Democrats there are the doctrines of Democracy, doctrines which push things towards certain consequences without help from local or temporary or accidental motives. There is a state built on democratic principles, and a society built, largely, on anti-democratic elements, clergy and aristocracy. Those elements of society must needs react upon the state; that is, try to get political power and use it to qualify the Democracy of the Constitution. And the state power must needs try to react on society, to protect itself against the hostile elements. This is a law of Nature, and the vividness and force with which we trace the motion of history depends on the degree to which we look beyond persons and fix our gaze on things.—This is dreadfully didactic prose. But this is my quarrel with Seeley. He discerns no Whiggism, but only Whigs. And he wonders at the mistakes of the Whigs when he ought to be following up the growth and modifications of their doctrine, and its influence on the Church, on Toleration, on European politics, on the English monarchy, the Colonies, finance, local government, justice, Scotland, and Ireland. So you may read in Alison of the profligacy of Mirabeau, the ferocity of Marat, the weakness of Louis, the sombre fanaticism

[1] For the expulsion of the Jesuits and other unauthorised congregations from French schools.

1880 of Robespierre. But what we want to know is why the old world that had lasted so long went to ruin, how the doctrine of equality sprang into omnipotence, how it changed the principles of administration, justice, international law, taxation, representation, property, and religion. Seeley is as sick as I am of the picturesque scenery of the historians of sense, but he does not like to go straight at the impersonal forces which rule the world, such as predestination, equality, divine right, secularism, congregationalism, nationality, and whatever other ruling ideas have grouped and propelled associations of men. And my great complaint is that he so much dislikes the intriguers of 1688 that he does not recognise the doctrine of 1688, which is one of the greatest forces, one of the three or four greatest forces, that have contributed to construct our civilisation, and make 1880 so unlike 1680. See H. of L.,[1] page 50,000. All which things make me more zealous, eager, anxious about the coming election than you who are in the midst of it, mindful of the blessing of repose and credulous of Seeley. Therefore I read with delight the address to Midlothian—more even than the speech in Marylebone—and am daily refreshed by Lowe, John Morley, even Rogers,[2] and fancy how happy the inquisitors were, who put a stop to the people they disagreed with! But I can quite feel your sensation in watching all this.

. . . . . .

If we win, then there will be no rest in this life for Mr. Gladstone. The victory will be his, and his only. And so will the responsibility be. Then will come the

[1] "History of Liberty."

[2] Thorold Rogers, sometime M.P. for Southwark, and Professor of Political Economy at Oxford.

late harvest and the gathering in of its heavy sheaves. 1880
And then there will be not much Hawarden for you.

I heartily wish your brothers success—even the riotous one[1]—especially the riotous one. I will come and wish him joy. If we are beaten, I shall be ashamed to let you see my grief. And as it is, I am ashamed to tell you how much I should like to hear from you, because you will suspect that I only want a supplement to the *Times*, or a later edition of the *Echo*. But the next few weeks are going to be a great turning-point in the history of our lifetime, and I believe you know how to be generous. Be generous before you are just. Do not temper mercy with justice.

. . . . . .

Cannes April 10

There is nothing to regret. Your brother has held a conspicuous place[2] in the most wonderful election contest of this century. He has held it in a manner which will never be forgotten in his lifetime, and which will do as much for him as victory; and the picture of the young untried son bursting into sudden popularity and turning men's thoughts from the absorbing exploits of his father adds an affecting domestic feature to that great biography. That meeting at Hawarden, after such a revolution and such a growth, is a thing I cannot think of without emotion.

So I cannot offer you anything sincere, except congratulation. We know now, indeed, that the British Democracy is neither Liberal nor Conservative in its permanent convictions, and therefore the party triumph is not as altogether satisfactory and secure as it should be. But the individual triumph, the homage rendered to a single name, could not be greater; and

[1] Herbert Gladstone.

[2] He stood for Middlesex.

1880 there could not be a fuller atonement for the desertion of 1874, than a success so personal as to convey dictatorial authority, apart from party merits and combinations.

Your idea has this advantage, that one must strike when the iron is hot, and it is now at white heat, and our legislative measures, even though they involve an early dissolution, ought to be begun soon. What I should fear most would be that, content with the intense reality of power, Mr. Gladstone should repeat the unhappy declarations of five years since in a way that would commit him for all future time; absolute abdication would be a misfortune all round, and the Conservative reaction would soon set in. But if an eventual return to power is not absolutely excluded, if no word is said of what might happen under certain contingencies, then we should still feel that we have an invincible reserve force, that, when our first line is broken, we can proclaim the Jehad and unfurl the green flag of the Prophet. For the patchwork settlement of 1875 depends on the life of a man who is several years older than your father,[1] who is a duke, and who has a deplorable habit of falling asleep early in the afternoon. But I only express this premature fear in view of circumstances which I am sure every influence in the country, except, perhaps, the influence of Windsor, will be strained to avert.

Your description of Lowe's generous and feeling sympathy is really touching. How little I thought, fourteen years ago,[2] when he was the hardest hitter your father had to meet, and when your father said he

[1] The late Duke of Devonshire, who lived till 1891.

[2] In 1866, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe took opposite sides on the question of Parliamentary Reform.

might well shrink from crossing swords with such a man, that he would close his active life as your brother's sponsor before vast constituencies, or that we should come to think of him listening with tears in his eyes to your brother's speeches, and muttering the words you tell. 1880

Please tell Herbert that I have followed his proceedings as carefully as one could at a distance, that I don't think much of his defeat, that, in short, I go halves with Lowe.[1]

I see that your sister made her way into the fray. I trust all the worry and toil was not too much for Mrs. Gladstone.

We are ending the season here, not as far out of the world as you would suppose; for I just saw your neighbour Westminster, and here are Argyll, Cardwell, and Goldsmid.

If Disraeli waits to meet Parliament, and to fall in the daylight, I may hope to have an opportunity of expressing to you myself all my sense of the meaning of the victory, and my want of sympathy for you in your defeat.[2]

. . . . . .

Paris May 23

I have been in Paris only a few hours, and have seen nobody yet but Broglie, Gavard, and Laugel. I must see Scherer and talk to him about your visit here in the autumn. I have not been here for two years, and many of my friends are growing so old that I don't like putting off my visit to them. So I must keep those who have not that defect for a happier time.

[1] Mr. Lowe, on hearing one of Mr. Herbert Gladstone's speeches during the Middlesex election, declared that in the pure gift of eloquence, there was nothing to choose between him and his father. [2] In Middlesex.

1880 *Paris May 14*

I shall be delighted to inaugurate breakfasting in Downing Street on Thursday; and I should very much like to drop in the night before, as you are to be there. But it seems very indiscreet; and if I dine with Lord Granville, I shall not be able to get away until very late, when you will be gone to bed. Tegernsee late hours cannot be kept in London. I will hope for the best, and keep all I have to say, partly for next week, partly for some more propitious season.

Würzburg May 23

Although ink was not invented to express our real feelings, I improve my first stoppage between two trains to thank you for three such delightful days in London. It was a shame to take up so much of your busy time, and to persecute you with the serpentine wisdom. I did not wish to turn into bitterness the sweetest thing on earth, but I fancied that there are things good to be observed in your great position which nobody will tell you if you do not hear them from the most wicked of your friends. Hayward, indeed, who walked home with me the other night, might claim that title and dispute my prerogative; and I thought he would be useful to you in many ways until I found out that he is only solicitous about getting invitations for ——.

Since you detected . . . lending herself to a humble intrigue, you can never be surprised at the revelations of disappointment and self-seeking, and must not believe that the smiling faces you see express unmixed loyalty and satisfaction. So I want you to be vigilant not to resent, but to pursue the work of disarming resentment, and not easily to persuade yourself that it is done.

To begin at the top. Here is Lowe, positively

wounded at the letter offering him a peerage instead 1880
of power, and wounded by the very thing which showed Mr. Gladstone's anxiety not to give him pain, by the absence of any reason given for being unable to offer him office. For one so often finds that acts specially showing delicacy and considerateness, little supererogatory works of kindness, are taken unkindly. Now that is just a state of mind you can improve away by an initiative of civility, bearing in mind that what Lowe says to me, his wife delivers from the house-tops.

. . . . . .

The animosity of the defeated party is natural, manifest, and invincible. They have offered Greenwood £110,000 for his newspaper, besides general offers of indefinite sums—enough to start it four or five times over. But the danger is not there, but at home; danger of disintegration and drifting. Both in church questions, and, ultimately, in land questions, your father is at variance with the great bulk of colleagues and followers—Chamberlain and Argyll in one Cabinet is an anomaly sure to tell in time, especially with Argyll discontented. So do not undervalue, or neglect, or waste, the social influence which centres in your hands.

Bismarck is so angry with Münster, that I hope he will transplant him; meanwhile it ought to be remembered that he, M., not only scouted the idea of Tory defeat, but wrote most disparagingly of Mr. Gladstone's influence and position.

Hayward will tell you what I learn from other sources, that Chenery really wishes to bring the *Times* round. Mr. Gladstone dislikes thinking of those things, and allowed Delane to slip from him. Don't leave the whole thing to be done at No. 18.[1]

[1] *i.e.*, by Lord Granville.

1880 I hope, towards the end of the session, you will consult MacColl about the Bavarian mystery. It would be nice if Leeds does not require its member just then. Above all things keep a very regular diary. You will be so glad afterwards, unless you have some distant correspondent, and make your letters to him, or her, do for a regular diary, which is also a good plan.

Tegernsee June 1 I received your letter last night on my return from Italy, and read the enclosure with interest. There are two things to be said in its defence. It is true that Hartington has, of late, shown higher qualities than the world attributed to him, and so far his adoring kinsfolk may consider their higher estimate justified. His whole attitude during the election was creditable, and his conduct towards Mr. Gladstone was correct.

Then, there is a grain of truth in the notion that the force that creates, and sustains in a crisis, is not quite the same that is wanted in time of prose to continue and to preserve; or in other words, that creative power makes a great consumption of party resources, and, if Burke gave up to party what was meant for mankind, it is better still to give up to mankind what some people mean to use for party. This is only a half truth, because party is not only, not so much, a group of men as a set of ideas and ideal aims; so that I do not admit Goldsmith's antithesis.[1] But taking party in the practical and popular sense, of an instrument for holding office, people are uneasily conscious that Mr. Gladstone will sacrifice it to loftier purpose sooner than they would like. Nothing is more untrue than the famous saying of an ancient historian, that power is retained by the same arts by which it is

[1] See p. 49, note 2.

acquired; untrue at least for men, though truer in the case of nations. 1880

But don't you see, pervading the letter and guiding the pen, the great intellectual and moral defect of the present day? I mean, the habit of dwelling on appearances, not on realities, of preferring the report to the bullet, and the echo to the report. To spend and lose a majority in some great cause, to be abused and ridiculed and calumniated, seems to the writer a misfortune so great that it is worth while to haul down one's flag rather than incur the risk of it. This is the power of journalism, of salons and club life, which teaches people to depend on popularity and success and not on the guide within, to act not from knowledge, but from opinion, and to be led by opinion of others rather than by knowledge which is their own. Not only ——, nearly everybody yields up his conscience, his practical judgment, into the keeping of others.

I do not accuse Hartington, but it is clear from the words of —— and ——, that there was a scheme to get Mr. Gladstone out of the way. To expect him to take the first step was to expect him to resign. It is so easy to do a dirty thing with self-satisfaction when it consists in abstaining from action. The one letter is only the plausible, affectionate, amplification of the other's impertinence, with a saving clause, on the first page, inserted from dictation, when the grievous indiscretion had been committed. . . .

. . . . . .

It does not matter seriously; but it serves to corroborate that grave speech of mine: trust nobody. I don't want you to think ill of people, or even to suspect them until the evidence is strong. It is not their virtue I question, but their attachment, and

1880 consequently their discretion. And I question their attachment because I doubt their thorough agreement with Mr. Gladstone. I don't say they are perfidious; but they are bound by an alliance they do not mean to last for ever.

. . . . . .

I do not cite Northcote and Carnarvon in confirmation. Soon after his resignation Carnarvon certainly wished to come over. At a solemn dinner inaugurating him as President of the Society of Antiquaries, he asked the secretaries to get me to propose his health. In a preceding speech he spoke of himself as a true Conservative at heart; and so I took those words up, congratulating him upon them in an Antiquarian, and eventually in a Liberal sense, indicating that they meant no more than we mean by constitutional, that there were no Pyrenees between us, that we entirely agreed with each other. We became close friends from that hour, and he made it very clear that he was pleased to be so interpreted. But he got little encouragement afterwards; and I fancied he honestly took this line—there are intelligent High Church men who dread, in the looming future, an alliance between democratic nonconformity and the predestined chief of the stern and unbending Tories, on the basis of anti-Erastianism. They say that the late election, swamping the vulgar Whig, has made those two allies stronger than ever, making each depend upon the other. They would stand a Liberal Government made up of Spencers and Cowpers, but they say that the demagogues have been strong enough to force their way in, and will make their power felt. So that property and the Church are in danger. I am ashamed to say that I thought this was Carnarvon's line. But Liddon knows what he says.

Be sure that I also know what I say when I assure 1880
you that the victoria pilgrimage will be a help to your father, and that Lady R.'s coachman will grease wheels more important than her own. Do go on, this summer at least, and see whether it is not true. Lady R. is, moreover, a friend of Lady Blennerhassett, and will sympathise with your feelings.

. . . . . .

I should not have supported our side in its attack on Sir Bartle Frere. It was not merely a question of empire, but of lives he would be unable to protect, against a savage army[1] far stronger than the whole armed population of Natal. I fancy that the analogy, or apparent analogy, with the Cabul policy, which he had so much promoted, turned Liberal opinion against him. But Frere is a strong, an able, and a plausible man. It is true that his strength is akin to obstinacy and self-will, that he is rather too plausible, and that he will gain his ends by crooked paths when he has tried the straight in vain. He is a dangerous agent, but, I should think, a useful adviser. Indians are not generally a healthy element in the body politic, and he has the constant vice of Indians, belief in force. But he has a breadth of mind that is rare among them; and I have known people who hated him, because he is so good. I do not suggest that that is the motive of the three Anabaptists who ply you with advice from which I disagree.

Thanks, a thousand thanks, for all the kindness of your letter. I enjoyed the Sherbrooke-Airlie-Trevelyan dinner very much, and shall envy Lady R. every Monday to come. . . .

[1] The Zulu.

1880 . . . . . .

Tegernsee June 9 My letter was posted with the one to you, though written, I think, the night before, so that it must have been stopped and opened by some postmaster whom the direction attracted, and who, like yourself, exaggerated its importance. There are truths so prosaic, so dense, so dull, that one can hardly state them without suggesting the idea of something subtler or more interesting beyond. Of course, to one who spends his time in watching and trying to understand the progress of political life and thought, no public event could equal the late progress from Dalmeny to Downing Street, and no prouder thing could happen than to be able to serve Mr. Gladstone's policy. Indeed, if I was not lured by his genius, his persistent friendship, and a curious sympathy in many deep questions, I should be, now, by qualities never so apparent as in the last few days, by the power of grasping principle in one hand and policy in the other, without clashing, which was shown in the opium speech, and just before, in the speech on the liability of employers. I don't know whether I could ever have been of use abroad, in other circumstances, if my nearest relation was not Foreign Secretary,[1] for there is only one place for which I could pretend to any special fitness. But as to trying to qualify as a candidate for anything at home, you would soon be satisfied that it is impossible, if I had a good opportunity of talking—if we climb a mountain, a very high mountain, or cross a broad and stormy lake some day.[2] But I think I must remind you of the old lady at Carlisle in Forty-Five, who shut herself up in terror of the Highlanders, and, not being pursued,

[1] Lord Granville.

[2] An allusion to expeditions at Tegernsee.

grew impatient, and cried out: "When are they going to begin?" 1880

I am a little disturbed at the highly ingenious and easy solution of the great party[1] question. It is dangerous, at any time, to multiply sources of weakness. Now there is a source of future weakness in the idea of power assumed only for a term limited and defined. A Parliament near its end becomes helpless and unable to act. When the period fixed, or supposed to be fixed, is approaching, power will slip away. Disappointed people, men impatient of having to wait, hungry, jealous, reluctant supporters, will gravitate in other directions, will promote rivalry, will speed the parting chief, will magnify the rising sun. By having only Free and Easies, you establish a festive Centre elsewhere, and the world, revolving in an improper orbit, may lose its way. There has been, in this direction, a slight waste of capital. . . .

. . . . . .

Your card came just after my letter was posted. *June 9*
I shall be at Munich on Friday, and have written to Hallam Tennyson, *poste restante;* but I hope to waylay them at the station. It will be pleasant to pilot the great man through Munich, or on the road to Achensthal, and I will do my best. . . .

I hope you will not quarrel with John Morley, for he seems to be making the *Pall Mall* the best Liberal paper in England. But he has so many points of antagonism to Mr. Gladstone that I am afraid. He is a sceptic; his studies are all French, eighteenth century; in political economy he is a bald Cobdenite, and will do scant justice to the political aspects of the

[1] Evening parties in Downing Street.

1880 French treaty; he is a friend of Lytton's, and, I suspect, of the peccant Strachey;[1] he has the obstinacy of a very honest mind. But I perceive that I am getting to be a bore. . . .

Tegernsee June 21 The Tennysons came and went, I am sorry to say, prematurely. They spent two days with us, and would have gone by Achensee to Innsbruck, but the rain sent them back to Munich, where they took the train for Italy. You will be surprised to learn that the Poet made a favourable impression on my ladies and children. He was not only a gracious Poet, but he told us lots of good stories, read aloud without pressure, walked repeatedly with M., and seemed interested in the books he carried to his room. Lady Acton took him to Kreuth and round the lake, and liked him well. Yet our ways were very strange to him, and he must have felt that he stood on the far verge of civilisation, without the enjoyments proper to savage life. Even I was tamed at last. There was a shell to crack, but I got at the kernel, chiefly at night, when everybody was in bed. His want of reality, his habit of walking on the clouds, the airiness of his metaphysics, the indefiniteness of his knowledge, his neglect of transitions, the looseness of his political reasonings—all this made up an alarming *cheval de frise.*

But then there was a gladness—not quickness—in taking a joke or story, a comic impatience of the external criticism of Taine and others found here, coupled with a simple dignity when reading ill-natured attacks, a grave groping for religious certainty, and a generosity in the treatment of rivals—of Browning and

[1] Sir John Strachey had seriously under-estimated the cost of the Afghan War.

Swinburne, though not of Taylor—that helped me through. He was not quite well, in consequence of the damp and of the mountain fare. 1880

I write for news to your hotel at Venice, the weather having been against the Dolomites.

Hallam is a much better and clearer politician than his father, and the only time we differed he was the truer Blue. If I add that I discovered why he refused a baronetcy, I suspect it is no more than you know very well already.

. . . . . .

I have made Liddon's acquaintance at last. Nothing but Tennyson prevented me from seeing more of him, for I found in him all that I love Oxford for, and only a very little of what I dislike in it.

. . . Let me suppress truths only when they are pleasant, and confess that I have a doubt about the scene with O'Donnell. Mr. Gladstone brought against him an engine as obsolete as the Veto,[1] not for the sake of France, for he could have his say in another way, but for a disorderly act which was not the worst on record. It seemed a stretch of severity when the claim to have been severely treated is the most telling feather in an Irish cap, when the fact of having been silenced in a new way inflates the lungs, if it does not strengthen the hands, of a Home Ruler. But perhaps I am so fresh from the history of the Plebs and their Tribunes that I am not quite sound as to the management of Obstructives.

[1] Mr. O'Donnell, an Irish member, moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of attacking the new French Ambassador, M. Challemel Lacour. Mr. Gladstone moved that he be not heard, and the debate on this motion occupied the whole sitting.

1880 Challemel Lacour is the scholar, the philosopher, the ascetic of that republican school of which Gambetta is the Tribune and the platform hero. He is their Minister in reserve; and Albert Gate is so manifestly the stepping-stone to power, he is so conspicuous a leader of untried policy, that the civility of his reception will be taken in France as a tribute to his party in a way there has been no example of. He is probably the most interesting specimen in existence of the school from which Robespierre would have chosen his colleagues. I should very, very much like to know how he impresses you; and there is so much more I should very much like to know, that I must learn to be less obtrusive.

. . . If the Bavarian Fawcett[1] opened one of my letters, I suspect it was because they have not got over their perplexity at the Queen informing the King of Bavaria of the Rammingen misalliance. Only, when I ask indiscreet questions do not suspect me of asking for indiscreet answers.

I think Reay deserves a seat in the H. of L. (in the vulgar sense of those mystic letters),[2] because he would perhaps not recognise your portrait of a barren, contradictory, envious, dissolving cynic. But the cap fits only too well, and I must acknowledge the fidelity of the likeness, and the art of Lenbach in the deeper shades. Do you remember, now, my prophecy on the Piazzetta, when I rejoiced that you would not stay long enough to learn to hate me?

In worldly quarters you will probably meet with the objection to Reay that he is more instructive than amusing; but I hardly know a more genuine good fellow.

[1] Then Postmaster-General.
[2] House of Lords, not "History of Liberty."

Do you know Morier, who is in town? Another man much objected to, but exceedingly able, resolute, and energetic. . . . 1880

. . . . . .

I hope you will see Blennerhassett, and think him worthy of his wife, who is still at Munich. Thank you for the good news you give from high places, and for the greasy wheels. Your sister's ears ought to have tingled at the good things said of her here last week.

. . . I hope you have not many correspondents as unmerciful as I am, or as much inclined to forget that you are living the most interesting of lives, by the intensest blaze of light in all the world. Only let me just thank you for your letter of yesterday and for your kindness in asking me to future entertainments. My prospects are too uncertain for me to accept. I must come only if I am wanted, and we shall hardly have any close divisions of importance until the end of July. Your invitations have doubled in value since Reay, whose particular group of friends is so well known as to betray him to the worst of guessers, has supplied you with a key—a false key—to my Venetian Mystery. *Tegernsee July 1*

Don't get tired too easily of London and its duties, for they are very real. They will not get on without you. And it is of no use coming over, if you are away on all kinds of larks.

We must wait till Sunday before the result of this evening's debate reaches Tegernsee. There is not any doubt the motion[1] is right; but I can imagine a much

[1] That any member claiming the right to affirm instead of taking an oath should be allowed to do so, subject to any liability imposed on him by statute. Under this motion Mr. Bradlaugh took his seat provisionally for Northampton.

1880 stronger statement of objections than the righteous indignation of the Tories produced.

Let us hope that John Morley was not discouraged by *encountering Sweet Cæsar's ghost on Tuesday.* The *Pall Mall* is getting a little personal, and too highly coloured in reports of fact. Do you know my intimate friend Lathbury, political editor of the *Economist?* A Weekly is easier to conduct than a Daily; but his articles seem to me excellent in tone, judgment, and impartiality. He wrote much formerly in the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall*, and I was negotiating with Delane to put him on the *Times* when Bagehot's death gave him the other opening. His wife was Bonamy Price's daughter. You never saw a man more frank, cheery, and well-conditioned.

I suppose Hayward has brought ——. Let him bring Chenery, that he may be useful as well as ornamental. It is not a matter of indifference that, when other journalists come, he should be left to stay away. Only don't let his sins be cast in his teeth.

I am afraid you will not take to Morier; but he is the greatest force in our diplomatic service, in spite of his discomfiture at Lisbon. He would be the very man to meet Challemel Lacour, who will be an offence to so many.

Liddon repeated at Munich the story of Carnarvon. He also gave the excuse which I suggested—that Chamberlain, Fawcett, Dilke alarmed him. But it is not a pretty story as he tells it, considering the way Carnarvon turned against the new Ministry.

. . . . . .

Tegernsee July 10 I am heartily glad to hear what you say of Mr. Gladstone's health and strength and spirits, and of the

nook behind Hampstead,[1] so much better than the dull air of the Thames Valley. There must be so much to harass him besides what appears, and what he can wind up and swamp in dazzling speech. Rosebery's anxiety is shared by many thorough Liberals, and it is not, perhaps, unfortunate that the perils of the position have made themselves felt at once, that the full warning comes in time, and the remedy can be taken early. 1880

I wonder whether, for a reason you know as well as I do, a thing we all perceive remains a mystery to the person most concerned to know it. The Liberal party is held together, not by forces within, but by a force above it. It consists, like the being that declined a chair, of two wings and a head. Without Mr. Gladstone's ascendency and the lustre of his fame, Harcourt, Argyll, and Bright would soon offend every group into insubordination and incohesion. The jealousy between the old Liberals, who are losing ground, and the usurping Radicals, and all other familiar elements of discontent, cannot be restrained by Parliamentary management alone. There remains a great sphere for direct personal influence. The men Mr. Gladstone used to look up to, Peel and Aberdeen, had not much of this, and I fancy he takes from them the belief that it is unnecessary or undignified. He has been so long without holding the threads of party: it is so natural, in one who writes and speaks so much, to suspect those who misunderstand him doing it voluntarily: it is so natural to him to underrate the effect of personal contact, that he may think that the sole legitimate method of mastering men is Parliamentary speaking, or writings addressed to mankind. But it is worth anything that people should know and see more of him, in society if possible.

[1] Littleberries, rented by Lord Aberdeen.

1880 First, because people are flattered. Next, because they are awed. Last, because they are conciliated, and so disciplined. And this applies to three sorts especially —members, diplomatists, and journalists. I am sure all that public policy can do to strengthen the Government will be done. But I note an unhappy impatience of those inferior arts my earthy spirit relies on.

I see how willing the *Times* is to be taken in hand, in spite of Walter. Sir Henry Maine, like Stephen, used to write in the *Pall Mall.* I don't know whether he has joined Morley. Maine's nature is to exercise power, and to find good reasons for adopted policy. Augustus or Napoleon would have made him Prime Minister. He has no strong sympathies, and is not at heart a Liberal, for he believes that Manchesterism will lose India. He considers also that the party, especially Lowe, has treated him less well than Salisbury. He is intensely nervous and sensitive. After that, I may say that I esteem him, with Mr. Gladstone, Newman, and Paget, the finest intellect in England. For some reason he is one of the men whom Lord Granville's arts do not reach. I wish you would see him. . . .

It would be very kind of you indeed to ask the Lathburys some Tuesday or Tuesdays. I say that because he is so much my friend, but he is also an eminently useful and trustworthy man. His wife wrote much in the *Saturday*—I don't remember the article you speak of. When I am a little in doubt about anything I consult Lathbury, who steadies and encourages me. When I feel very sure of some conclusion I go to Maine, who always knocks it to pieces. He is much the more instructive of the two. The other is more pleasant.

With Maine, above him indeed at the India Office,

is Sir Louis Mallet, a thoughtful economist, a sincere, almost passionate Liberal, but under Cobden's influence, one of those sincere Liberals least attracted by your father. He is very sound beyond the Indus, and I wish you sometimes saw him; but I ought not, perhaps, to say it, for I half suspect the Prime Minister has some ancient reason for objecting to him. 1880

The breakfast with the archbishop,[1] the philosopher,[2] the Frenchman,[3] and even with G—— does not suggest hilarity. What you will do for sketches of character after the Reays leave England, I cannot imagine.

. . . . . .

Marienbad August 8

I don't know how to thank you for thinking of me at such a moment.[4] It was hard to bear being away just then, and you must have gone through a dreadful time. Even with the scraps of information that reach one here, I have been able to realise much of it. Almost the first consoling thing was the report of your escapade with Wolverton.

Every line of your letter is a monument of your goodness, even your disinclination to go into details. But I am afraid you must have been terribly knocked up—so soon, too, after your own illness, of which I will not speak now, but which, indeed, I was very sorry to hear of. And I do trust that Mrs. Gladstone was enabled to go through it all without excessive alarm or fatigue. She will not need words to be assured of all my sympathy. I am persuaded that your greatest pleasure, just now, comes from the expressive conduct of adversaries, not from the vain words of friends.

[1] Trench. [2] Herbert Spencer. [3] M. Tachard.
[4] Mr. Gladstone had just then a short, but serious illness.

1880 Our defeat in the Lords[1] opens a wide vista of difficulty and trouble — partly because it injures the Government, but not much, and will probably increase the ascendency of the P.M.; particularly because of the H. of Lords itself. Nobody will ever believe that such a majority was due to honest and disinterested motives. People will say, and will say truly, that an assembly which is moved by selfish and sordid motives, when there is a question of preventing ruin and starvation, is not only an injury to the poor, but a disgrace to the community, and there is no way out of it. Small majorities may give way or abstain; but after so determined a demonstration, repentance will be suicidal. And the one instance in modern times where the Lords have proved stronger than the Commons, because postponement here was prohibition, is a question of helping the poor who suffer, at a slight sacrifice and slighter danger to people immensely rich.

We are only beginning with questions of this kind. Did you hear the speech at the end of May in which Mr. Gladstone spoke of that class which is so numerous that it is virtually the entire nation? Graver words were never spoken in Parliament, for the entire land is virtually in the hands of another class. The considerations which this contrast, this contradiction suggests, have a mighty future before them, a future damaging to my boy's prospect of ever sitting on a red leather bench.

I am sorry we were not 52.[2] It would have been impressive, like the Doctrinaires of whom it was said: "Ils sont quatre; mais quand ils veulent imposer par

[1] On the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, intended to protect the Irish tenants from eviction during the winter.

[2] The majority against the Bill was 230, of whom 51 were Liberals.

le nombre, ils prêtendent être cinq." Indeed, for all 1880
the reasons which Argyll repudiates, justifying my prophecy about him in the spirit, if not to the letter, there has been no measure for which I should be so anxious to vote. I wrote to Lord G.[1] to send me timely warning, as there was no trouble I would not take.

Having been to a doctor, without any idea that I was seriously out of order, I was sent here suddenly, and am forbidden, for reasons I must acknowledge, to move for some weeks to come. It could not have happened at a worse moment for me.

I was sorry for Frere, and should probably have allowed his daughter to come round me. . . .

It is too kind of you to remember, after all that has passed over you and the nation, details of former letters. Unless there has been a change lately, there are two editors of the *Economist*, one for money matters and the other for politics. Maine will be proud and happy, and ought to be much obliged to me for supplying a topic for so pleasant a conversation. I wonder whether he showed you the luminous side of his mind, whether you saw why he always disagrees with me, and why some people are more afraid than fond of him.

Whatever passes at the end of the Session, I do hope that a season of rest is included in our friend Dr. A. Clark's prescriptions. It might give me some remote chance of seeing you again.

That Dutch Interior is charming, and I hope you enjoyed the circle of widowers as much as I did your graphic account of them. It is delightful to think of the repose after the storm has been weathered so

[1] Granville.

1880 well. Argyll practising his next speech in the solitude of night, ——'s diplomatic deafness and yet more artful slumber, his brother with a hook placidly fixed in Bright's aggressive nose, the refined American[1] offended by the rigidity of the Democrat, the group of listening Senators, the harmless youth, the envious beauty—and then the great historic background and the one overshadowing figure — there is not a page in Mme. de Rémusat approaching it. Do you write like this to other people? Do you write at least six pages of diary every night? Please do; and let me read it now and then. And remember that one touch of ill-nature makes the whole world kin. If you are really going to be left at Hawarden, you ought to shut your door, shut your eyes, recall all that you have seen and heard during the last six months, and write it carefully down. You have such an opportunity and such a power. I am not like the Roman:[2] I envy almost as much as I admire.

You make me happy by allowing me to conclude that I gave no offence by what I wrote of our exalted House. I don't mean that your uneasiness was quite unreasonable. When a Bill[3] gets knocked about in Committee, even when an artful Minister means it to be knocked about, it can never go up to the Lords harmonious, consistent, and the genuine expression of a policy. There are not two sides to every question, but there is always an opening, in such cases, for sincere criticism. The way out of that is to pass the second reading, and to correct in Committee what was done wrong in Committee. What I mean in this case is that the Bill involved a principle of infinite force and

[1] Lowell.

[2] Non equidem invideo; miror magis.

[3] See p. 28, note 1.

value, which the Ministry probably veiled to their own eyes, and which the Lords were right to resist as a private association, which they are not; wrong to resist as a disinterested national institution, which is their claim to exist. 1880

It is impossible to exaggerate the depth of aversion the Bill has evoked. You must have heard enough of it. One man has spent two days here for the purpose of telling me how wrong it was. Another writes to me that he has paired for the session, feeling that Government will be obliged to those who help them when they are hopelessly wrong, although the help consists in pairing and going to Vichy. These are idle men, representative of thousands.

It reminds me of the great landowner, Bedford, who reminds me of Arthur,[1] who reminds me of Maine. I suppose it was a refuge in Piccadilly that revealed the secret to me. Arthur's one fault is a delight in secrets. Although Maine is unfitted to be P.M. (under any but a despotic monarch), nobody has so large a conception of all questions relating to the tenure of land. I dare say he has been asked to say what he knows about Ireland. What pure reason and boundless knowledge can do, without sympathy or throb, Maine can do better than any man in England.

I am sorry to think of Lowell's sun sinking behind your horizon. At first sight one always fancies that those who question the certainty of history sap the certainty of religion, or are the victims of those who do, and I fancy I should have had a word (with corners) to throw at him. The Rémusat volumes are one of my landmarks in judging Napoleon. It is, of all accounts by competent people, the most injurious to his memory, as

[1] Lord Arthur Russell.

1880 Segur's are the most favourable. Until I read them, I thought the fixed intention to put Enghien to death, the charge of murder, not proven. If the authority of these recollections breaks down, I must invent for myself a new Napoleon. After allowing for the fact that they were written, or re-written, years later, like the Diary of John Adams, the Memoirs of S. Simon, the History of Burnet, of Clarendon, the Annals of Tacitus, the Nine Muses of Herodotus, the Eight Books of Thucydides, which are the most conspicuous sources of all history, and for the suspicion that there was a great secret she not only could not tell, but wrote in order to obliterate, and after giving whatever weight it deserves to the little joke that calls it: "Souvenir d'une femme de chambre renvoyée," I am so persuaded that the book is authentic and true, that I should have liked to hear the argument. But this is true, history does not stand or fall with historians. From the thirteenth century we rely much more on letters than on histories written for the public. I need not add that the history of our Lord which we find in the Epistles is one most valuable testimony in favour of the Gospels. So that even if Lowell can damage the reports in this book, we can restore the certainty of history by the aid of letters, of documents and of those facts in which independent witnesses agree.

Is it not heroic of your sister renouncing a life like your own for the toil of Newnham? I wish her success and happiness in her pilgrimage most sincerely. By-the-bye your other sister is the real pilgrim, and I wish I had known in time to warn my belongings of her movements.

My time here is up, and I go home to-morrow. As a proper P.M.'s daughter you ought to say you hope

I was really ill, to justify fifty-one. . . . It is absurd to come all the way to England and not to see you; so I shall come only if I am really wanted. I write at once to discover whether and when. Your telegram is a great disappointment. I wonder where they will go. Cannes is the place I recommend, but not till October. If I am not summoned home from Tegernsee for Hares or Burials,[1] I look forward to Ammergau, and wish you were coming. 1880

. . . . . .

I ought to write no more. I ought to hide my useless hand altogether. There was a week during which I looked forward to a summons home, a summons that never came; and after having persistently applied for it, I thought that it was better not to make the offer of my vote more urgent than the demand for it. I know how much I have missed and lost. Circumstances over which I have no control would probably have arrested my maritime enterprise at Gravesend.[2] But how pleasant Holmbury would have been! And then there was, and is, so much to talk to you about, so much that evaporates in writing and will not keep, so much that will. As there can hardly be an autumn session after prorogation in September, I must wait for the end of January. Meanwhile I hope you will cultivate the notion of Tegernsee. Such a break with the great world would do Mr. Gladstone good, and I fancy we could make you like the place once more. Let me have that hope before me. *Tegernsee Sept. 21*

. . . . . .

[1] The reference is to the Ground Game Bill, which enabled tenants to shoot hares and rabbits on their farms; and to the Burials Bill, which permitted the interment of Dissenters in parish churchyards with their own religious rites.

[2] Mr. Gladstone's voyage in the *Grantully Castle*.

1880 My children went to Ammergau and came back not deeply moved, but strongly impressed. I let them go without me from a sort of dread many people must have felt, not because of the chief actor, for a pious, simple-minded peasant's conception of the two natures is probably not more inadequate than my own, but what we do gradually realise in meditating the Passion is the character and experience of the disciples, the effect of that companionship, the utter human weakness that survived in the midst of the intense feelings it must have awakened in them. Those are contrasts that can be expressed, and are apparently too subtle for the performers at Ammergau. I am told that, on the whole, the audience remained cold.

The answer to my telegram was signed in a way that led me to doubt whether it came from you. I trust it was sent by your brother, and that Mr. Gladstone was not molested by my inquiries on the top of so many more. It is beginning at the wrong end to read David Copperfield first, but he is worth anything to busy men, because his fun is so hearty and so easy, and he rouses the emotions by such direct and simple methods. I am ashamed to think how much more often I return to Dickens than to George Eliot.

Do some of the brothers or secretaries make a point of reading the *Temps?* Of all that is written against the Ministry and its general policy, the *Temps* articles seem to me the most serious and suggestive, and at Marienbad I went through a course of Austrian newspapers, which are very hostile, and better written than our Tory organs, but not near so good as the *Temps.* I am afraid it is my friend Scherer. Not being a Frenchman, his patriotism is peculiarly lively. Don't call Chenery my friend. I have never seen him, and

only know that he is making a mess of the *Times.* 1880
But my reasons were those you know well, and they will hold good next year.

You are quite right in all your corrections. ——
—— is a very good fellow. His only artifice is his discretion. His mind is accustomed to travel along roads straight, and wide, and beaten, so that it accumulates conventional truths and borrowed convictions, but he is as well meaning and as sincere as a man can well be who is not on the watch to root up prejudices. His son is threatened with Toryism as with the gout. I don't know which is worse. . . . I talk nonsense at times, because sense is monotonous. It won't do to shrink from hard speeches and judgments when they are necessary. But it is horrible to make them when one is not compelled. Do believe me when I say that is what makes you delightful, and a certain generous, unselfish, courageous credulity is part of it. Commynes says: "It is no shame to be suspicious, but only to be deceived." That is a contemporary of Machiavelli. Two centuries later you will find in Télémaque these words: "Celui qui craint avec excès d'être trompé merite de l'être, et l'est presque toujours grossièrement." That is the progress of 200 years. Don't you think you see the distance between Bismarck and your father?

You have had an excellent idea about those letters. If you go on and arrange them, it will be very precious to him some idle day, if that should ever come, and to you all. The inner reality of history is so unlike the back of the cards, and it takes so long to get at it, which does not prevent us from disbelieving what is current as history, but makes us wish to sift it, and dig through mud to solid foundations. I conclude that all

1880 political correspondence has been set in order regularly, otherwise that ought to be thought of too.

. . . . . .

The bit of scandal suspected in the unwritten part of the Rémusat Memoirs, was supposed to have belonged to the time of the camp at Boulogne, of which she gives very full accounts. But it is not necessary to believe all those things. There would be no pure reputations. I suspend my belief even about Fersen. . . . They cannot publish Talleyrand's Memoirs because he tells so many tales of that kind, and people still living would be surprised to find out who they are.

I was flattered to know that I had supplied topics of conversation and even of dispute at Holmbury. I should like always to be accused by Lord Granville, defended by your father, and sentenced by you. But don't always associate me with bottles of physic, even in dreams.

From something you wrote I gather that Mr. Gladstone did not altogether disagree with Forster's sentiments; I am sure I did not; yet it seemed to me very hazardous to make such a speech in Mr. Gladstone's absence, suggesting wide differences in the Ministry, rousing expectations which will go on growing through the autumn, making the Lords more angry than repentant, using terms so vague that they can be almost honestly misrepresented, and a great deal more. Home Rule will make great capital out of the events that happened after your father fell ill.

J. McCarthy's two last volumes[1] are not equal to the first, but you will be interested in reading them. But here is post-time, and I cannot say one-half.

[1] "History of Our Own Times."

1880
Tegernsee, Sept. 27

It is not easy to add to the panegyric pronounced on St. Hilaire by a too zealous friend in Friday's *Pall Mall.* That gratifying description is not quite satisfactory. The writer affirms that St. Hilaire is an Orientalist of the first rank, and a Greek scholar unsurpassed in France. He knows Greek thoroughly for working purposes, but not exquisitely as a scholar; and he has done little, on the whole, for his idol Aristotle in the way of consulting the manuscripts and improving the unsettled text. And although he has studied Eastern religions deeply, I do not believe that he is a master of Eastern languages. Nor does he live on a third floor in that good street the Rue d'Astorg. He does not live there at all, but three miles away, in a charming little bachelor's house at Passy. His rooms, formerly in the Rue d'Astorg, were "au fond de la cour au premier," and his maid-servant is not (and was not) elderly, but young, though ill-favoured. And it is not fair to say, with obvious purpose, that he never deserts the Thiers dinner-table except for the Germans. I made his acquaintance at a dinner at Lord Lyons's.

From all which I conclude that the letter is a vehement endeavour to recommend the new Minister abroad. Last summer St. Hilaire gave me the three big volumes of his Aristotelian Metaphysics, and, when I remonstrated, said, "Vous me le rendrez un jour, d'une autre façon." That is what I am doing at this moment, when I tell you how very highly I rate the man.

St. Hilaire is quite at the top of scholars and philosophers of the second class. Not a discoverer, not an originator, not even clever in the sense common with Frenchmen, not eloquent at all, not vivid or pointed in phrase, sufficient in knowledge, but not abounding, sound, but not supple, accustomed to heavy work in

1880 the darkness, unused to effect, to influence, or to applause, unsympathetic and a little isolated, but high-minded, devoted to principle, willing, even enthusiastic, to sacrifice himself, his comfort, his life, his reputation, to public duty or scientific truth. He is not vain, so much as didactic; there is a method about him that is a little severe, a solidity that wants relief. His character has been shaped by long devotion to a cause that was hopeless, by which there was nothing to gain except the joy of being a pioneer of ideas assured of distant triumph. So that he is disinterested, consistent, patient, tolerant, convinced, and brave. Indeed, courage, contempt of death, is the one thing I have heard him speak of with something like display. The Republican party, to which he belonged even under Charles X., and of which he is the patriarch, had a good deal of dirty work to wash off; and I have observed that he was not communicative when, in an interest which it were superfluous to mention, I have tried to learn the secret history of Republicanism under the monarchy. There are few of them who never touched pitch. But he and Littré are distinct from most others by their hard work and their voluntary poverty.

This makes him peculiarly hateful to opponents. A legitimate Marquis said to me: "C'est un honnête homme, qui nous coupera la tête de la manière la plus honnête du monde." People who admit that he is unstained by the gross vices of his party, speak of him as an enthusiast, and a dupe, and no doubt expect him to acquiesce, like Pilate, in all manner of wrong that he will not initiate.

I do not feel that there is no truth at all in these imputations. I have found that he thinks accurately, that he is even penetrating, but not impressive. He

told me the speech he had prepared against the Jesuits, which, I believe, he never delivered. The argument was: The conscience of man is his most divine possession. Jesuits give up conscience to authority, therefore they forfeit the rights of men, which are the rights of conscience, and have no claim to toleration. I won't undertake to refute this argument; but it is pre-eminently unparliamentary, and smells of the oil he burns all day. St. Hilaire does not believe in the Christian religion, but he has Descartes's philosophic belief in God, and the elevated morality of the Stoics. Not the least of his merits is that having spent his life on Aristotle, he told me that he thought more highly of Plato; and in his Introduction to the Ethics he shows the weakness of his hero's attack on Platonism. In saying this he overcame a strong temptation. Scientifically his great achievement is the transposition of the several books of the Politics—which were in hopeless confusion before him. All Germany accepts the arrangement he proposed, and as the work is the ablest production of antiquity, this is no small matter. As a moderate, unambitious, totally dispassionate Republican, he belongs to the Thiers Centre. He thinks Jules Simon the most eminent public man in France, so that he is scarcely to the Left of Freycinet. He despises and detests Laboulaye, the oracle of the Centre Gauche. I often heard, but am not sure, that St. Hilaire turned the scale, and made Thiers adopt, and enforce, Republicanism. 1880

Forgive me for writing so soon and so confusedly.

Don't think me as prolific as ——, but I must begin again, as I had to send off my letter with nothing but an answer to your question in it. Lord Granville's *Tegernsee October 3*

1880 visit must have been more busy than pleasant; and their dinner topic is provoking because one always hears that the best men were those one could not have known. Remembering Macaulay, Circourt, and Rémusat, I do not care to believe that Cousin or Radowitz was far superior to them in talk. But then I, again, look back to the people I knew with regret, and think my contemporaries less amusing

If ever I see Hawarden again, I hope it will not be for a night and half a day, but I do not know when that will be. Let us fix our thoughts on Tegernsee, and pave the way to rest and distraction here next summer.

Without claiming the discernment of Tennyson, I hold fast to what I said. There may be people you dislike for one or two reasons. You have no tenderness for Dizzy; and I am not sure you cared much for either of our gondola companions. There are one or two unpardonable crimes in your code, and one or two chasms that even Dante's mercy cannot bridge. But you never show it, and ill-nature must show itself in speech. I have no doubt at all that the relish with which you held up the mirror of my vices the other day had more of sorrow than of anger, and only a scrap of malice. It must have been Cheney, especially if it was a reminiscence of Holmbury. Freddy Leveson has a touching fidelity to monotonous friendships. This one was laid down, I think, on Holland House foundations.

If I wrapped my poet in too thick a hide of mystery (observe the joke—own cousin to the Bite of Ecuador), it was because I fancied you knew that you have no business to be the P.M.'s daughter, and would never have been, but that Lady Waldegrave, lured by the sweep of the Thames at Nuneham, neglected, or failed, to hook that brilliant Young Englander, Monckton

Milnes, poet and statesman. But I know several men, some you never heard of, who, looking back along the road where they took the wrong turning, say to themselves, or at least to their friends: "Well, well; but for this or that I should be P.M. now!" 1880

I have been prevented from finishing by interruptions, one of which was the brief appearance of the Freddy Cavendishes, spoiled by their uncomfortable haste to get away. I suppose what makes her so nice is, partly her affection for her relations. There certainly was no *arrière pensée* in her way of speaking of your father.

You cannot too much cultivate his taste for Dickens. Beware of "Little Dorrit," "Oliver Twist," and "Dombey." In "Chuzzlewit" the English scenes are often amusing, but there is a story about Pecksniff that may repel him.

. . . . . .

Please do not destroy the ease and serenity and confidence of my letters, which are chatted and whispered, more than written, by wanting to show them —even to Morley, in whom I have great reliance. I should write quite differently, as you rightly say, if I was not writing to the most chosen of correspondents. To Mr. Gladstone I already wrote what was due to my friendship with St. Hilaire, especially as I fancied that Downing Street would be strongly prejudiced against him. Do not turn yourself from an end into a means —one does not justify the other. . . .

I have been afraid to write. The delicious and most spiritual gift[1] was sent to me here, whither we came early, only to find ourselves in sore trouble, for *Cannes Dec. 14*

[1] Shakespeare's Sonnets, pocket edition.

1880 a child had died of diphtheria in our villa just before we arrived. We had to settle in half-furnished apartments, where Mrs. Flower[1] found us, bringing a flavour of Hawarden. What has stood in my way is this: Some time ago, recalling a foolish speech of mine, a year old, and spoken under the spell of a great charm, you asked me to repeat it on paper. I hesitated long, and whilst I hesitated, the little volume came, and made it churlish to decline any wish of yours. I resolved that the best sign of the sincerity of my gratitude would be to do what you had asked, and to be much more foolish than ever by putting on impertinent record the evanescent conversation of Tegernsee. But I have been so fearful of giving you more annoyance than pleasure, whether by the seeming of flattery or of censure, that I have allowed myself to slip into a much more grievous fault. Will you understand me and try to forgive me? I can never thank you enough for all the friendship of which that beautiful volume is the treasured symbol. There is so much of your thought in the beauty of it, and so much in the choice of it—more than you could guess. A dear friend of mine, now dead,[2] devoted himself to the study of the Sonnets, as the real key to Shakespeare, being the form of his own ideas, not what he gave to his characters. We discussed them much together in long evenings at Aldenham, and he wrote a book about them, which he followed up with a volume called "The School of Shakespeare"; and the two together are the best introduction to him that I know. . . . Swinburne himself has recognised their merit; so that a lost part

[1] Now Lady Battersea.

[2] Richard Simpson (1820–1876), author of an "Introduction to the Philosophy of Shakespeare's Sonnets" (1868) and "The School of Shakespeare" (1872).

of my life came back to me with your gift. All which 1880
is to say that, whereas all that comes from you is very precious to me, if anything could add to its price it was the happy chance that guided your hand.

Beyond that I must thank you very heartily for the confidence you showed me in sending me that early letter.[1] It fills a large blank in my conception and understanding of his life, for it shows—for the first time to me—how large a part of what we know and contemplate with wonder is an original gift, and was born with him, and how little, on the other hand, has been added by the training of life. There are things which experience has restrained, and checked in their exuberance; but there are almost all the germs of the power that rules the movements of half a world. When I read that skit of the revered philosopher,[2] it almost seemed to me as if I had sometimes doubted his greatness, and I think you were very good-natured. He is one of the few Englishmen of genius; one of the most perfect masters of our language that ever wrote; and when one has said that, and said it as forcibly as can be, one comes to a deplorable catalogue of evil qualities with which I shall not darken my pages. It was very good of you to send me that introduction.

I went to the Ghetto, and was amazed at the knowledge and conversation of a lady who turned out to be Mrs. Mark Pattison. . . . She seemed to be much in the secrets of the Chamberlain-Morley-Dilke faction, and despondent about the *Pall Mall.* But I like Mrs. Flower exceedingly, though I had only a glimpse of her. I thought her intelligent, sensible, and good—things not to be lightly spoken of anybody—and especially

[1] A letter from Mr. Gladstone on the choice of a profession.
[2] Mr. Ruskin.

1880 not to you. As to Lady Blennerhassett, she is kind-hearted, knows how to think straight, and is the cleverest woman I ever met out of St. John's Wood.[1] If I ever said less than this in her favour, it would be injustice to do so now. Sir Rowland Blennerhassett fell at one time into bad hands—hands of Midhat and of Newman. . . . I fancied he was half a jingo, half an Ultramontane; and his wife seemed to back him, and held much aloof from us. They have richly made up for it since, and there is no Irishman whom I should more wish to see in conference with your father just now. He told me so much that was curious and important and concrete, that I begged him to put our conversation on paper, that I might use it in the proper quarter. He has not chosen to do it, I fear from a motive of delicacy. For we suppose that a set is being made against Forster; and he would not like, by private letters, to contribute to it, as his statements certainly would have done. But all these are words of wisdom: it is time for foolishness. I remember the occasion. You wished that you could disengage your mind from its surroundings, and learn the judgment of posterity; and I said that, if you chose, you might hear it at once. How I retrieved my audacity I cannot tell; and it is an awkward matter to recall, unless, like the ghosts that looked so foolish in the vestibule of the "Inferno," I avoid both good and evil.

The generation you consult will be more democratic and better instructed than our own; for the progress of democracy, though not constant, is certain, and the progress of knowledge is both constant and certain. It will be more severe in literary judgments, and more

[1] George Eliot lived in St. John's Wood.

generous in political. With this prospect before me 1880
I ought to have answered that hereafter, when our descendants shall stand before the slab that is not yet laid among the monuments of famous Englishmen, they will say that Chatham knew how to inspire a nation with his energy, but was poorly furnished with knowledge and ideas; that the capacity of Fox was never proved in office, though he was the first of debaters; that Pitt, the strongest of ministers, was among the weakest of legislators; that no Foreign Secretary has equalled Canning, but that he showed no other administrative ability; that Peel, who excelled as an administrator, a debater, and a tactician, fell everywhere short of genius; and that the highest merits of the five without their drawbacks were united in Mr. Gladstone. Possibly they may remember that his only rival in depth, and wealth, and force of mind was neither admitted to the Cabinet nor buried in the Abbey. They will not say of him, as of Burke, that his writing equalled his speaking, or surpassed it like Macaulay's. For though his books manifest the range of his powers, if they do not establish a distinct and substantive reputation, they will breed regret that he suffered anything to divert him from that career in which his supremacy was undisputed among the men of his time. People who suspect that he sometimes disparaged himself by not recognising the secret of his own superiority will incline to believe that he fell into another error of wise and good men, who are not ashamed to fail in the rigid estimate of characters and talents. This will serve them to explain his lofty unfitness to deal with sordid motives, and to control that undignified but necessary work, his inability to sway certain kinds of men, and that strange property

1880 of his influence, which is greatest with multitudes, less in society—and least at home. And it will help them to understand a mystery that is becoming very prominent, that he formed no school, and left no disciples who were to him what Windham, Grenville, Wellesley, Canning, Castlereagh were to Pitt; that his colleagues followed him because he had the nation at his back, by force more than by persuasion, and chafed as he did by the side of Palmerston.

Some keys, I imagine, will be lost, and some finer lines will yield to the effacing fingers: the impress left by early friendship with men who died young, like Hallam, or from whom he was parted, like Hope Scott; the ceremonious deference to authorities that reigned in college days under a system heavily weighted with tradition; the microscopic subtlety and care in the choice of words, in guarding against misinterpretation and in correcting it, which belonged to the Oxford training, which is a growth of no other school, which even in such eminent men as Newman and Liddon is nearly a vice, and is a perpetual stumbling-block and a snare for lesser men—these are points appreciable by those who know him that must be obscure to those who come after us. They will wonder how it was that an intellect remarkable for originality and independence, matchless in vigour, fertility, and clearness, continued so long shrouded in convictions imbibed so early as to be akin to prejudices, and was outstripped in the process of emancipation by inferior minds. The pride of democratic consistency will aim its shafts at those lingering footsteps, as a scientific age will resent the familiarity and sympathy with Italian thought to the detriment of more perfect instruments of knowledge and of power, and that inadequate estimate of the

French and German genius which has been unfortunately reciprocal. 1880

But all the things about which no New Zealander will feel as we do, do not disturb your appeal to the serene and impartial judgment of history. When our problems are solved and our struggles ended, when distance has restored the proportions of things, and the sun has set for all but the highest summits, his fame will increase even in things where it seems impossible to add to it. Ask all the clever men you know, who were the greatest British orators, and there are ten or twelve names that will appear on every list. There is no such acknowledged primacy among them as Mirabeau enjoys in France or Webster in America. Macaulay told me that Brougham was the best speaker he had heard; Lord Russell preferred Plunket; and Gaskell, Canning. I have heard people who judged by efficacy assign the first place to Peel, O'Connell, Palmerston, and to an evangelical lecturer, whom I dare say nobody but Lord Harrowby remembers, of the name of Burnett. But that illustrious chain of English eloquence that begins in the Walpolean battles, ends with Mr. Gladstone. His rivals divide his gifts like the generals of Alexander. One may equal him in beauty of composition, another in the art of statement, and a third, perhaps, comes near him in fluency and fire. But he alone possesses all the qualities of an orator; and when men come to remember what his speeches accomplished, how it was the same whether he prepared an oration or hurled a reply, whether he addressed a British mob or the cream of Italian politicians, and would still be the same if he spoke in Latin to Convocation, they will admit no rival. "C'est la grandeur de Berryer avec la souplesse de Thiers," was

1880 the judgment of the ablest of the Ultramontanes on his speech on Charities.

There are especially two qualities that will not be found in other men. First, the vigorous and perpetual progress of his mind. Later ages will know what in this critical autumn of a famous year is only guessed, that even now, at 70, in his second ministry, after half a century of public life, his thoughts are clearing, moving, changing, on the two highest of all political questions.[1]

His other pre-eminent characteristic is the union of theory and policy. Bonaparte must have possessed the same mastery of infinite detail; and the best democrats, Jefferson, Sieyès, and Mill, were firm and faithful in their grasp of speculative principle. But in democracy that doctrinal fidelity is neither difficult nor very desirable of attainment. Its disciples embrace a ready-made system that has been thought out like the higher mathematics, beyond the need or the chance of application. The sums have been worked, the answers are known. There is no secret about their art. Their prescriptions are in the books, tabulated and ready for use. We always know what is coming. We know that the doctrine of equality leads by steps not only logical, but almost mechanical, to sacrifice the principle of liberty to the principle of quantity; that, being unable to abdicate responsibility and power, it attacks genuine representation, and, as there is no limit where there is no control, invades, sooner or later, both property and religion. In a doctrine so simple, consistency is no merit. But in Mr. Gladstone there is all the resource and policy of the heroes of Carlyle's worship, and yet he moves scrupulously along the

[1] Agrarian Laws and Ecclesiastical Establishments.

lines of the science of statesmanship. Those who deem 1880
that Burke was the first political genius until now, must at this point admit his inferiority. He loved to evade the arbitration of principle. He was prolific of arguments that were admirable but not decisive. He dreaded two-edged weapons and maxims that faced both ways. Through his inconsistencies we can perceive that his mind stood in a brighter light than his language; but he refused to employ in America reasons which might be fitted to Ireland, lest he should become odious to the great families and impossible with the King.[1] Half of his genius was spent in masking the secret that hampered it. Goldsmith's cruel line is literally true.[2]

Looking abroad, beyond the walls of Westminster, for objects worthy of comparison, they will say that other men, such as Hamilton and Cavour, accomplished work as great; that Turgot and Roon were unsurpassed in administrative craft; that Clay and Thiers were as dexterous in parliamentary management; that Berryer and Webster resembled him in gifts of speech, Guizot and Radowitz in fulness of thought; but that in the three elements of greatness combined, the man, the power, and the result—character, genius, and success—none reached his level.

The decisive test of his greatness will be the gap he will leave. Among those who come after him there will be none who understand that the men who pay wages ought not to be the political masters of those who earn them, (because laws should be adapted to those who have the heaviest stake in the country, for

[1] He stood by Ireland to the end, and his last letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe reaffirms the principles of his youth.

[2] "And to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

1880 whom misgovernment means not mortified pride or stinted luxury, but want and pain, and degradation and risk to their own lives and to their children's souls,) and who yet can understand and feel sympathy for institutions that incorporate tradition and prolong the reign of the dead. Fill the blanks, deepen the contrasts, shut your eyes to my handwriting, and, if you make believe very much, you shall hear the roll of the ages.

Dec. 14 Don't let me be unjust to Lecky. Dr. Smith asked me to review his "Eighteenth Century," but added that if I found myself inclining to severity he would wish to recall the proposal, inasmuch as the *Quarterly* had just attacked Tyndall. For it happens that Smith[1] and I sometimes dine at a self-satisfied place that calls itself The Club. Good men belong to it, but stay away: Lowe, that he may not meet ——, whom he dislikes sober, and detests drunk; the P.M., because he too much appreciates the sweetness of home; others, for other futile reasons. The group that continues faithful and carries on the tradition of Johnson and Garrick is consequently small, and it is a delicate matter to meet in such close lists men one is editorially holding up to ridicule and obloquy. Indeed, the presence of both *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* on that narrow stage imparts a taste of muttered thunder to most of our meetings. Tyndall and Lecky are members, and Smith did not like to be on with a new quarrel before he was off with the old. He had spoken unfavourably of an early and unripe book of Lecky's, who was gratified when he heard of the message I had received, and still more when Hayward reviewed him instead of me. I

[1] The editor of the *Quarterly Review.*

declined, because I was already in the clutches of a longer task, and because I find that people quarrel with me for reviewing them—not from dislike of the book. Hayward could find nothing in it he did not know before. But I was more fortunate; I learned a great deal, and should have said that it was solid, original, and just. Perhaps not deep or strong or lively, or even suggestive, for that is a refined quality, inconsistent with the habit of telling all one knows and thinks, and dotting all the *i*'s. The book is lop-sided, having grown out of a desire to demolish Froude's Irish volumes. And it was a mistake to treat the central, political history as a thing generally known, that could be taken for granted. No part of modern history has been so searched and sifted as to be without urgent need of new and deeper inquiry, and the touch of a fresh mind. Here is a new volume of 600 pages on Mary Stuart, by a man I never heard of, in which every other page tells us something unknown before, and the times of Walpole, Pelham, Pitt, being stirred by no surviving strife, have been much less studied than the great dispute whether Protestant or Catholic should reign in England. Neglecting the inexhaustible discoveries before him in the Archives, Lecky has to give sentence when he gives too little evidence, to describe characters more fully than careers, and to obtrude his own very good sense where a true scholar and artist would take care not to be seen. 1880

There is another defect, due to the secular tone of Lecky's mind, but common to most historians. The age he writes of was the last in which permanent political doctrines were formed by ecclesiastical principles. Men very easily shape their notions of what government ought to be by their conception of divine right,

1880 of that domain in which the actual legislator is God. As to one class of minds Church interests are the supreme law in politics, to others, Church forms are the supreme example. Nobody is so fanatical as Nigel Penruddocke; but through subtle channels the influence works, and it was not merely a propelling, but a constructive force in politics from the end of the Middle Ages until the middle of the eighteenth century, when it became fixed in the theories of men like Atterbury, Toland, Hoadley, Wilson, Warburton—whose innermost instincts might be better exposed.

As to the novel of the season,[1] it is so dull and so absurd that I cannot get beyond the first volume. Except querulousness, it has nearly all the bad qualities of old age; and if St. Barbe is meant for Thackeray, it is contemptible even in caricature. My neighbour Salisbury must feel that his time is soon coming.

There is a little disappointment for Hayward even in the "Life of Fox." There is less pioneer's work in it than in Fitzmaurice. But the fulness of knowledge, the force and finish of the style (you see by my three F's that I have been studying the Irish question) have revealed a new man. I see him compared to his uncle,[2] and I think it is not an exaggeration, though Taine says there have been only two men in the world who had Macaulay's perspicuity. G. O.[3] is as transparent as graceful, and more easy. The only thing that has shocked me yet is his presumptuous assurance about the authorship of Junius. It is a Whig dogma that Francis was Junius; but that is mere Macaulayolatry. I have seen half the arguments that convinced me

[1] Lord Beaconsfield's "Endymion," in which Nigel Penruddocke is one of the characters.

[2] Lord Macaulay.

[3] George Otto Trevelyan.

thirty years ago fall to pieces; and I am provoked 1880
that Trevelyan gives me old conclusions instead of new proofs. If his speaking has made as much progress as his writing, the Government has acquired a future Secretary of State. But I am still unhappy at their meeting Parliament with Courtney out in the cold.

As I quote Taine, I ought to say that I do not agree with him. The problems Macaulay made so clear were not the most difficult. Fenwick's attainder, and the theory of standing armies—purple patches in the way of exposition—are trifles compared with questions which jurists, divines, economists have to discuss. The phases of the Pelagian controversy, or the principles of government about which the Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist, and Anglican Churches contended, would better have tested his power of making darkness clear.

I am glad that I wrote to Fagan before reading his book.[1] For I wrote about the Italian correspondence, which is curious. But the biography does not deserve the praise it gets from partial people in Downing Street. Houghton, I hear, has written ill-naturedly about Panizzi; but the book is as full as an egg of mistakes, and of things worse than mistakes, so that even remonstrance would be thrown away. You will read with interest two volumes of Mérimée's letters to Panizzi, just coming out. He was a bad man, and generally wrong; but few men ever wrote so well.

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I will get the *Church Quarterly* at Nice, where I go to see my friend Arnim, who is dying there, and shall

[1] "Life of Panizzi."

1880 be very curious to read the article.[1] There is not a more interesting or unexhausted topic in all history than Julian, but I would have waited for the promised edition of his work against the Christians, which had not appeared when I left Germany.

Here is Parker,[2] fresh from Hawarden; and when I think of your long and obstinate cold, I cannot help regretting that you did not make the Cardwells bring you to Montfleury, where they are our nearest neighbours. He is much better than half a year ago, but very weak. For three weeks the sun has shone all day. Greatcoats and umbrellas are obsolete; and we have the most beautiful walks.

T. B. Potter, also at Montfleury, and a great favourite with my children, keeps me supplied with Cobdenian literature, and I have read Brodrick[3] with much pleasure.

Of course we are always thinking of Ireland, wishing for heroic treatment, such as would have saved Louis XVI. and the old French Monarchy, despairing of the needful overwhelming majority in the Commons, of any majority in the Lords, of union and strength in the Ministry; cheered by several intelligent letters and articles in the newspapers, sure only of the chief, and more sure of his strong mind than of his strong hand. If he has time for anything else, I hope he has read *La Belgique et le Vatican*, the volume published by Frère-Orban, the Belgian Minister, a weighty study of Vaticanism.

I am under the shock of the sudden Cabinet and of

[1] "Julian the Apostate." By the Rev. the Hon. Arthur Lyttelton, afterwards Bishop of Southampton.

[2] Charles Stewart Parker, then M.P. for Perth.

[3] "English Land and English Landlords." By the Honble. George Brodrick, late Warden of Merton.

the *Standard* article, and am waiting for an answer to a telegram to know whether I must come at once. If not now, then on Monday or Tuesday before the opening, for I want to get the cue of the situation from the P.M. (an affair of five minutes), to see you, not quite so rapid a proceeding, and to hear the first debates. 1880

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Your patient and forgiving letter is my best Xmas gift. It will be a joy indeed to see you again next week. I hope not only in the midst of gilded ceremonial. *Cannes Dec. 27*

It is so like you to take my nonsense kindly and only to dispute the praise. But I am not quite so far off as you imagine. In speaking of home I must have indicated by a—break, that there was a change of key; that I could not stay among the lofty entities that surround Tennyson even when he butters toast, that I was coming down from the silver side of the clouds and groping for things of earth. So that my climax is not quite literally meant. Having thus paved the way to retreat from an exposed position, let me take my stand for a moment, and say that I think it not quite untenable. . . . You yourself, who have shared so much of your father's thoughts and confidence, have hardly adapted yourself to his chosen tastes and special pursuits? In more than one of the later phases of his life, I fancy you hardly recognised the secret laws of the growth of his mind, and join him sometimes by an effort, over a gap. There is an ancient scholar at Cannes, who told me that he has such confidence in the P.M. that he feels sure he will succeed in defending his policy. I partly said and partly thought that anybody can be on

1880 Mr. Gladstone's side who waits to be under the thrall of his speech. The difficulty is to hear the grass growing, to know the road by which he travels, the description of engine, the quality of the stuff he treats with, the stars he steers by. The scholar is old and ugly, and, it may be, tiresome. It is impossible to be less like you. But is there not one bit of likeness—in the stars?

Really it is time for me to adopt the Carey tactics and run away from my post of defiance.

You know one of the two subjects. You will know the other on the last night of the debate on the address. I am only listening to the grass.

You will not resist what I said of our five Ministers if you will consider one word. I think I spoke of their best qualities, not of all their qualities. Pitt's art of making himself necessary to the King and the constituencies is unapproached. But then it is a vice, not a merit, to live for expedients, and not for ideas. Chatham was very successful as a War Minister. Mr. Gladstone has not rivalled him in that capacity. I fancy that both Pitt and Peel had a stronger hold than he has on the City. Please remember that I am possessed of a Whig devil, and neither Peel nor Pitt lives in my Walhalla. The great name of Mr. Canning and the greater name of Mr. Burke[1] are the only names that I hold in highest honour since party government was invented.

You can hardly imagine what Burke is for all of us who think about politics, and are not wrapped in the blaze and the whirlwind of Rousseau. Systems of scientific thought have been built up by famous scholars on the fragments that fell from

[1] An allusion to Mr. Gladstone's speech on the Reform Bill of 1866.

his table. Great literary fortunes have been made 1880
by men who traded on the hundredth part of him. Brougham and Lowe lived by the vitality of his ideas. Mackintosh and Macaulay are only Burke trimmed and stripped of all that touched the skies. Montalembert, borrowing a hint from Döllinger, says that Burke and Shakespeare were the two greatest Englishmen.

But when I speak of Shakespeare the news of last Wednesday[1] comes back to me, and it seems as if the sun had gone out. You cannot think how much I owed her. Of eighteen or twenty writers by whom I am conscious that my mind has been formed, she was one. Of course I mean ways, not conclusions. In problems of life and thought, which baffled Shakespeare disgracefully, her touch was unfailing. No writer ever lived who had anything like her power of manifold, but disinterested and impartially observant sympathy. If Sophocles or Cervantes had lived in the light of our culture, if Dante had prospered like Manzoni, George Eliot might have had a rival.

. . . . . .

I do think that, of the three greatest Liberals, Burke is equally good in speaking and writing; Macaulay better in writing, and Mr. Gladstone better in speaking. I doubt whether he feels it; and if he does not feel it, then I should say that there is a want of perfect knowledge and judgment. That want I see clearly in his views as to other men. He hardly ever, I think, judges them too severely. Sometimes I am persuaded he judges with an exceeding generosity, and I fancy it is because he will not charge his mind with uncharitableness, because he

[1] George Eliot's death.

1880 does not allow for the wind, that he does not always make bull's eyes.

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1881 *Athenæum Jan. 14* It is impossible to leave England without emotion, when my last glimpse of your father was lying in bed and in the great doctor's hands. It will indeed be such a charity if you will send a line on a P.C. by to-morrow, Saturday's post, to me at Goschen's, Seacox Heath, Hawkhurst, Kent, that we may have Sunday's comfort in good news, and I say advisedly a P.C. that you may not suspect me of an artifice to obtain that other delight, of an early letter, such as those you write. Don't let the lesson of suspicion turn against the teacher. Don't even let it damage anybody much. I will not spoil my own ideal. That American book is too wicked![1]

Forgive me if there is one point, if only one, on which I do not agree with Ruskin, who never writes to any one what might not be written to the world, on the fly-leaves of books.

Your mother must think me an ill-mannered wretch, even if she did not discover it before—for going away without thanking her for that beautiful photograph. I did not feel sure, at first, how much she was weighted with trouble, for I had never witnessed her serene courage. I will leave it to you, if you please, mindful of an exquisite proverb quoted this evening in the House as follows: Speech is silence, but silver is golden.

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[1] "Democracy," a political novel, published anonymously, which made much noise at the time.

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What I said of Ruskin was only to excuse the platitude I wrote in his book, not to rescue my letters from appropriate destruction. 1881 *La Madeleine Jan. 20*

You evidently think that George Eliot is not the only novelist at whose feet I have sat, and that I have learned from "Endymion" the delicate art of flattery. So that the seed of suspicion has taken root after all, and I hang by my own rope.

We might perhaps agree about Trevelyan better than you suppose. I probably started from a lower estimate of the man, and was astonished at his fulness of knowledge and the vigour of his pen. The oblique style of narrative is said to be an invention of Gibbon, and Trevelyan is of course full of Gibbon's times and writings. And I quite agree with you that the business of historians is to get out of the way, and, like the man who plays Punch, to concentrate attention on their personages. Nobody, however, did this less than his illustrious uncle.

I shall look out with extreme interest for your kinsman's[1] review of George Eliot. I heard so many hard things said of her by Arnold and Palgrave, but Wolseley is one of her admirers.

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My letter was hardly posted when yours arrived. Besides what you mention, Arthur Lyttelton would find an important paper in the *Pall Mall* of the last week of the year, on the early Warwickshire life of George Eliot, and a letter of hers on the original of Dinah. I fancy it would be worth while to look up *La Madeleine Jan. 21*

[1] Arthur Lyttelton's. See his "Modern Poets of Faith, Doubt and Paganism, and other Essays" (Murray).

1881 some of her Westminster reviews between 1850 and 1854; and the last word of her philosophy is more outspoken in Lewes's scientific writings than in her own.

It is hard to say why I rate "Middlemarch" so high. There was a touch of failure in the two preceding books, in "Felix Holt," and even in "Romola." And it was "Middlemarch" that revealed to me not only her grand serenity, but her superiority to some of the greatest writers. My life is spent in endless striving to make out the inner point of view, the *raison d'être*, the secret of fascination for powerful minds, of systems of religion and philosophy, and of politics, the offspring of the others, and one finds that the deepest historians know how to display their origin and their defects, but do not know how to think or to feel as men do who live in the grasp of the various systems. And if they sometimes do, it is from a sort of sympathy with the one or the other, which creates partiality and exclusiveness and antipathies. Poets are no better. Hugo, who tries so hard to do justice to the Bishop and the Conventionnel, to the nuns and the Jacobinical priest, fails from want of contact with the royalist nobleman and the revolutionary triumvirate, as Shakespeare fails ignobly with the Roman Plebs. George Eliot seemed to me capable not only of reading the diverse hearts of men, but of creeping into their skin, watching the world through their eyes, feeling their latent background of conviction, discerning theory and habit, influences of thought and knowledge, of life and of descent, and having obtained this experience, recovering her independence, stripping off the borrowed shell, and exposing scientifically and indifferently the soul of a Vestal, a Crusader, an Anabaptist, an Inquisitor, a Dervish, a Nihilist, or a Cavalier without

attraction, preference, or caricature. And each of them should say that she displayed him in his strength, that she gave rational form to motives he had imperfectly analysed, that she laid bare features in his character he had never realised. 1881

I heard the close of Friday's debate, and was much distressed at the hopeless badness of C——'s speech. But the situation gained by the result, and still more by what passed on Monday.

The topic of the reason for delay is, as I hinted at my last moment, a very delicate one, and not to be discussed lightly. Suppose there is bloodshed in Ireland before the Protection Bill passes; then a reproach would lie at their door for thinking more of eventualities that regard themselves than of the immediate danger to life, and the heavy strain on families of small means dependent on their own or other people's rents. And there will be this argument to meet, that less severity in October or November would go farther than greater severity in March.

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The journey across France was really freezing. So I remained at Paris for a few hours' rest and no visits. Bisaccia came south in the same train, and Goldsmid, who gives me a dinner to-night. I see by the papers that it is still too cold for your pony-carriage.

My whole social philosophy consists in the desire not merely to gratify by civilities, but to bring men into contact with Mr. Gladstone—be it by breakfast, dinner, or small and early, or even by a formal talking to like ——'s—and your best art, together with the due discharge of pasteboard, will be to bring him to bear, directly, on the seventy or eighty men who want it, and are fit for it, and don't neglect Lady Spencer's

1881 parties, or Lady Granville's less multifarious evenings. It is the confrontation, not the ceremony, that matters. False believer,[1] because impostor, not to say hypocrite. I mean that, beyond his charitableness and a written eloquence that always fills me with an unspeakable admiration and delight, I do not believe in your artful philosopher; that the differences revealed to us by his writings, his conversation at Hawarden, the letter you treated so generously, cut down to the bone, and leave me no space or patience for anything better than a gracious courtesy. Therefore, in abetting your studies in Ruskinese, I am no better than a humbug, which is not a word to be written in books that will live and will irritate as long as the language.

La Madeleine Jan. 28

My faults are to you an opportunity of displaying those qualities to which you will not let me allude.

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Those are not truisms about George Eliot. The reality of her characters is generally perfect. They are not quite always vivid, or consistent. They degenerate sometimes into reminiscences. But they live a life apart from hers, and do not serve her purposes. I wonder whether Arthur Lyttelton knows any good German criticism of her; I don't think I have seen any.

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The Tories were sure to cheer as wildly as the Irish hit. You have, I fancy, felt the weakness of Forster's great speech,[2] which, to the eye of a practised revolutionist, slightly disparages the Government.

He makes out an irresistible case against those who

[1] This refers to the inscription Lord Acton inserted in Ruskin's "Arrows of the Chace"—"From a False Believer."

[2] Speech on introducing the Peace Preservation Bill.

think all is right in Ireland, so far at least as to need nothing exceptional from Parliament. He thinks little of the man—the imaginary hearer—who thinks that the Irish peasants have a case; that the suffering and the wrong are real, and are partly the work of the law; that the horrors which fill us with impatience are the direct —though not the unmixed—consequence thereof; that the first way to remove effects is to remove the cause; that, whereas all this is certain, it remains to be proved that the evil is beyond that treatment; and that the movement which has its root in the soil, cannot be so dissociated from the movement that has its root in America, that the one may heal and the other may starve. Probably he does not wish to speak of remedial measures beforehand, and in the same comminatory breath, or to dwell too much on the purely revolutionary peril, which is a delicate topic, about which people are not agreed, and which it is awkward to prove. But he is so little occupied with the one real objection, in this speech charged with the wisdom of many Cabinet discussions, that one wonders whether that other line of thought, so repugnant to the Castle,[1] was ever forcibly put forward in the Cabinet. 1881

What you say of great men manifesting only themselves in their works—the predominance, one should say, of the lyrical mood—is profoundly true. Milton and Byron are supreme examples. It is the reason why there are so few great epics, and so few great—there are many good—histories. It is, in higher literary work, the same solicitude that makes it almost impossible for men to think of the right instead of the expedient. You can hardly imagine how people wondered what Mr. Gladstone's motives were in the

[1] Dublin Castle.

1881 Bulgarian affair. Most politicians would be ashamed of having done any considerable thing because it was right, from no motive more clever than duty.

Fancy the *Encyclopædia Britannica* asking me to do their article on Jesuits! I answered that I hoped they would have one on Mrs. Lewes. I have written my testimony to Mr. Cross,[1] encouraging him about the intended life. . . . Thank you a thousand times beforehand for every chance line you promise me. You do not know how to say things that are not interesting.

La Madeleine Feb. 2

There is no way of describing the light and the joy which your letters bring to this place of exile, with all the reality of the old country, and with the ideal which belongs only to you and yours. I was hoping that you had heard the glorious speech.[2] It must have been a treat for you; and we saw at once, from our *Pall Mall* itself, how profound the impression had been. My imaginary listener, if he had listened, might not have remained unconverted. Certainly, as you say, the strongest confirmation of both speech and policy is the attitude of these ill-conditioned Irishmen. As I have paired with Lord Limerick (who has married a Miss Colquhoun of Cannes, and prefers bondage at his father-in-law's villa to the protection of the land-league in his ancestral domain, and who would support the Bill), I have virtually paired against it, and am, I dare say, the only peer on that side, unless Henry Stanley[3] escapes from Clare, where he is detained, under pretence of Boycotting, by the transparent artifices of friends. . . .

[1] George Eliot's husband.

[2] On the introduction of the new rules of Procedure after the expulsion of the Irish Members.

[3] The late Lord Stanley of Alderley.

I was prepared to believe the *Standard* account by a visit from Wolverton, who offered to show me his last letter from Downing Street, and I told him I thought he could do it. He was delighted to find the Hawarden photograph at Cannes. You will not see him for a fortnight, unless he lost all his money to-day at Monte Carlo. He deserves to lose it. He wants a strong Coercion Bill and an illusory Land Bill; but his party and personal loyalty make up for much obdurate deafness to the Morley predications. 1881

I am very much obliged indeed for your message about Trevelyan. I talked about bringing in outsiders, and men not of one's own politics; and I spoke of Trollope and Morley in the former capacity, and of Goschen in the latter. Trollope is condemned as noisy. There are obvious objections to a newspaper editor, and the particular Lyttelton objection was urged, in a letter to me, by Reeve.[1] Derby and Arthur Russell put forward G. O.,[2] and I leave Goschen in the lurch until he answers my letter from Paris pointing out the error of his ways; but I hope you will be gracious to him before he goes. Goschen is above sordid motives. He dreads the Radicals, detests ——, despises ——, and, if left to himself and the nearest influences, he will drift away. His lips have never been touched with the sacred fire of Liberty. His international soul has never glowed with the zeal of the good old cause. He is moved by the fears to which City men are prone, and there are people more calculating than he is, who work those fears, partly to check the Government, partly to provide a new chief for the Opposition. Nobody can keep him straight but Mr. Gladstone. There is nothing present to offer him, as

[1] The Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.

[2] Trevelyan.

1881 I take it for granted that one Budget will not satisfy his—the P.M.'s—vast financial designs. But he can employ the plan of Napoleon, who said to reluctant tribunes: "Que ne venez vous discuter avec moi, dans mon Cabinet? Nous aurions des conversations de famille." It is not a profound constitutional view of the uses of an opposition; but there is a hint in it for Mr. Gladstone, who underrates his own power over men in private. The bill as sketched by the *Standard* will strengthen his hold on Goschen.

Chamberlain has been often as indiscreet as the theory he expounded to F. Cavendish implies, but he can hardly have prompted the *Standard*.

I am glad to think of Dizzy dining at No. 18. I wonder whether it is because Lord Granville has heard he is Rowchester.[1] Your choice of topics shows how you were on your guard with Sir Bartle. The true thing about him is the strength, not the softness. I know that many have been taken in by that assumed quality, and much resented it. The right place for him would be in Asia Minor.

If you were to see those letters you would say that Burne-Jones is not the only hand at missing a likeness; but in politics you would recognise exactly what must have been your impression, that I had strung my expectations a little above practicable height, and came down with anguish to the baseness of prose—like the heroine of my dreams (I mean Dorothea, not the lady whose name is in your letter).

I fear there is a perceptible change for the worse in Cardwell.

[1] In "Endymion."

1881
La Madeleine
Feb. 10

You have gone through an anxious time, and I need not say where my thoughts were fixed during the week of Revolution.[1] I trust you are well out of it, and found relief at Lubbock's. Wolverton is growing excited and goes back. I shall miss his good spirits, his keen pugnacity, his singularly practical and unphilosophical view of politics, and Godley's[2] letters. And I don't know whether the Government will gain an adviser prompt, if they make a mistake, to help them to find it out.

I have suggested to May[3] a precedent for the action of the Speaker in stopping the discussion. It was three days before the Little Gentleman in Black Velvet[4] at Hampton Court changed the dynasty. The House was in Committee; the Tories were getting the worst of it and wished to prevent a division. The Whigs would not hear of an adjournment, and were jubilant, when one of their number had a stroke of apoplexy. Harley, the Speaker, in concert with the Chairman, seized the opportunity, took the chair, and closed the debate. Although the majority was floored, nobody seems to have remonstrated. I presume it is not on the Journals, and does not count.

In the hundreds of reflections suggested by the day of the scene, and of the superb speech, there is one slightly laced with regret (laced is a metaphor taken from toddy and negus). Once in 1816, the extreme Royalists, taking offence, walked out of the Chamber of Deputies. The majority were about to vote when

[1] The obstruction of the Peace Preservation Bill, which ended in the autocratic intervention of the Speaker, and the removal of the Irish Members from the House.

[2] Sir Arthur Godley, at that time private secretary to Mr. Gladstone.

[3] Sir Erskine May.

[4] The Jacobite description of the mole whose burrowings caused the death of William the Third by making his horse stumble.

1881 De Serre[1] said: "Personne ne croira que j'approuve, même indirectement, l'espèce de scission dont nos yeux sont frappés en ce moment. Mais je demande s'il ne serait pas de la sagesse, je dirai même de la générosité de la majorité ici constatée et qui pourrait delibérer très légalement, de remettre la séance à demain. Il importe qu'on ne puisse pas dire que vous avez refusé d'entendre ceux de vos membres qui pourraient avoir des observations à faire." And the debate was adjourned.

I like to quote De Serre, for though a Tory in those days, he would have developed if he had lived; and there is no statesman in French parliamentary history who has so much analogy with Mr. Gladstone.

Arrival of your letter from High Elms,[2] with enclosure—I was surprised at those Irishmen going astray so hopelessly, when they had a man amongst them who knows so much about parliamentary tactics as Justin McCarthy. Their anger at the arrest of Davitt shows that it was not properly deliberate. One argument with which you must have grown familiar in the autumn comes to one's mind again since the Resolution. Free government is government by consent; and consent is conveyed by the choice constituencies make of their representatives. In a local and circumscribed, not imperial question, legislation must, as a rule, depend on the consent of those concerned, as represented in Parliament. This argument is not conclusive against Coercion, because the Land League has not even an Irish majority on its side. But it might apply to the three quarter vote.[3] In a purely Irish question the

[1] The Comte de Serre was a Minister under Louis XVIII., and a leader of the Moderate Royalists after the Restoration.

[2] Sir John Lubbock's.

[3] For closing debate.

whole Irish representation might be swamped and silenced by half the House. I think the Irish might make some play here by insisting on the distinction between wanton obstruction—stoppage of imperial measures and paralysis of the House—and obstruction on their own exclusive ground. Wanton obstruction cannot be tolerated in a Parliament that legislates for one-fifth of mankind, although it was the method by which Rome acquired liberty. But the Resolution makes even local obstruction impossible to the unanimous people of Ireland. It establishes a degree of subjection that did not exist before. As the test of liberty is the position and security of minorities, it has to encounter a very grave objection which is not felt in Mr. Gladstone's time, but might be, under men like Harcourt, or the late Lord Derby, or George Grenville. 1881

As the police[1] are responsible, I hope Mr. Gladstone will always be ready to listen to their advice. But he knows very well that it is the function of the police to take fright, and to wish to be very much indeed on the safe side.

I am glad you saw more of Lubbock, and liked him better. He has astonishing attainments, and a power of various work that I always envy. And he is gentle to the verge of weakness. He has something to learn on the gravest side of human knowledge; apart from that he would execute his own scheme[2] better than almost anybody. How I should like to see my own List of Authorities drawn up by you! There was a Pope who said that fifty books would include every good idea in the world. Literature has doubled

[1] At this period shadowing Mr. Gladstone's movements.

[2] Sir John Lubbock, in conversation with Miss Gladstone, complained of the lack of a guide or supreme authority in the choice of books. She suggested Lord Acton, and mentioned this talk in writing to him.

1881 since then, and one would have to take a hundred. How interesting it would be to get that question answered by one's most intelligent acquaintances: Winton,[1] Dunelm,[2] Church, Stanley, Liddon, Max Müller, Jowett, Lowell, Freeman, Lecky, Morley, Maine, Argyll, Tennyson, Newman, W. E. G., Paget,[3] Sherbrooke, Arnold, Stephen, Goldwin Smith, Hutton, Pattison, Jebb, Symonds, and very few others. There would be a surprising agreement. One is generally tempted to give a preference to writers whose influence one has felt. But that is often accidental. It is by accident, by the accident that I read Coleridge first, that Carlyle never did me any good. If I had spoken of him it would not have been from the fulness of the heart. Excepting Froude, I think him the most detestable of historians. The doctrine of heroes, the doctrine that will is above law, comes next in atrocity to the doctrine that the flag covers the goods, that the cause justifies its agents, which is what Froude lives for. Carlyle's robust mental independence is not the same thing as originality. The Germans love him because he is an echo of the voices of their own classic age. He lived on the thought of Germany when it was not at its best, between Herder and Richter, before the age of discipline and science. Germany since 1840 is very different from that which inspired him; and his conception of its teaching was a grotesque anachronism. It gave him his most valuable faculty, that of standing aside from the current of contemporary English ideas, and looking at it from an Archimedean point, but it gave him no rule for judging, no test of truth, no definite conviction, no certain method and no sure

[1] Harold Browne. [2] Lightfoot.
[3] Sir James Paget, the great surgeon.

conclusion. But he had historic grasp—which is a rare quality—some sympathy with things that are not evident, and a vague, fluctuating notion of the work of impersonal forces. There is a flash of genius in "Past and Present," and in the "French Revolution," though it is a wretched history. And he invented Oliver Cromwell. That is the positive result of him, that, and his personal influence over many considerable minds—a stimulating, not a guiding influence; as when Stanley asked what he ought to do, and Carlyle answered: "Do your best!" You see that I agree with the judgment of the *Times* (outer sheet); and the *Daily News*, preferring him to Macaulay and G. Eliot, and constructively to Mill or Newman or Morley, seems to me ridiculous. I should speak differently if, reading him earlier, I had learned from him instead of Coleridge the lesson of intellectual detachment. 1881

. . . . . .

How could you read Laveleye's foolish letters? Pray don't believe him. His speech about Herbert Spencer is an after-thought. He said he thought him inferior to Mill; the rest is padding. As he has emptied his sack of compliments on me I am sorry to think of the other things you would have him say, for they must be in the other key. Have you read the *Nineteenth Century* on Liberal Philosophy?[1] Mr. Gladstone certainly would not allow the definition of Liberalism attributed to him to stand alone. My book begins with 100 definitions,[2] but that is not to be one of them, and I wish I knew of one fit to stand in your father's name.

[1] By Robert Wallace, afterwards M.P. for East Edinburgh. The definition, "trust in the people, tempered by prudence," was laid down by Mr. Gladstone himself in a speech at Oxford in 1877.

[2] Of Liberty.

1881 The royal dinner-party was evidently a high success, and, apart from royalty, I was glad to think of Derby frequenting Downing Street. I hope his time will come soon, although when he and Goschen are in the Cabinet I am afraid I shall lose my tenant at Prince's Gate. . . .

Cannes Feb. 16 Your kindness to B—— is like nothing but yourself—not only for procuring him his innings so opportunely, but for interpreting so generously his perplexity and irresolution. I dare say you are right to lay the blame on me. It will be very amusing to get remonstrances from bewildered friends, and I think I shall have to write to Arthur Russell, as the most inquisitive and idle of them all, and therefore the best to trust with a secret that is to be told. For pray believe that there is no real truth in the report.

I paired for the Government with Lord Limerick against.[1] No doubt, if he was present and voted, he would support the bill. Therefore, in balancing or neutralising his vote, I am virtually pairing with a supporter, not an opponent, and am myself practically opposing. But that is only my metaphysical commentary, founded on the fact that an Irish Conservative is sure to like the bill much better than I do. There is no understanding of the kind between us, and neither of us mentioned this particular measure to the other. I am simply in Cork's list, paired with a good Tory. And it all comes to nothing, for none of us expect a division on the second reading.

The only people with whom I need disclaim the impeachment would be Morley & Co., as I should only be making Radical capital out of a little joke. The

[1] On the Peace Preservation Bill.

joke consisting in your representing me as a worse enemy to Ministers than all the Tories and half the Irish. 1881

I made out in the autumn that Blennerhassett laid a good deal of blame on Forster's want of flexibility of mind and of *coup d'œil*. I dare say he is quite right. There is evident truth in one remark you quote. The excuse for agitation is by no means always its cause; and I would not be too hopeful of the effects even of the most perfect or most popular Land Bill. Ultramontane priests will never, permanently, be on the side of the State. To nurse their own influence and the religious faith of the people, they always magnify antagonism and persecution, which implies denunciation of antagonists and persecutors. And there are deeper reasons still, why it is useless to apply to Irish measures the usual test of success. However, I am more often angry with our clergy for absolutism than for revolution, so that I will say no more. . . .

I never knew Amalie v. Lasaulx; but her brother was one of the best friends I ever had. For two years I followed his lectures on ancient literature, philosophy, &c., and he left his library to me when he died. His whole mind was occupied with religious ideas and studies; but it was an intellectual religiousness, without a notion of a church or any fervour of prayer. His sister had his independence of mind and the same generous idealism, and a humble piety which he had not, and which is remarkably rare among intellectual Germans.

. . . The Speaker[1] seems to be a physician as well as a statesman. The victory over the disturbing Irish must bring your father immense relief. It is twenty-one years since I met him at Brighton, horribly jaded,

[1] Mr. Brand, afterwards Lord Hampden.

1881 and getting rapid baths of sea-air. I hope he will benefit this time.

You will have seen Scherer on Carlyle. The passage in Monday's *Pall Mall*, exalting Arnold at his expense, only shows that his[1] burlesque language provoked the rigid and highly white-chokered critic. Froude will be a worthy biographer for so unscrupulous a hero.

Cannes Feb. 19 What I said of St. Hilaire has become a little obsolete since his resolute denial that the Greeks have a European decision—or award, as it stood in the English draft—in their favour. I cannot remember whether I indicated the mental peculiarity which has developed into such impolicy; but whatever I did say is for you to apply and employ entirely as you please. The Arthur Russells, moreover, know him enough to introduce the necessary vinegar.

The little joke about Forster is no deeper than Æsop. One said: "He has a woman's heart with a lion's spirit." Somebody answered: "Rather, a lion's skin."

It was reported that Ecuador[2] was preparing a Bark in defence of the Pope. Your father suggested that it must be a vocal bark. Others said it was probably Jesuit's bark (they prevail in Ecuador). And so it went on—that it was worse than their bite, &c., &c., &c.

I thought the *World's* apology to the Irish utterly impudent, but one of the best strokes of wit I can remember in my time.

I meant it as you say; only the slightest tinge. One need only look at them to see that generosity would

[1] Carlyle's.

[2] See page 40.

be as completely wasted on them as on Salisbury, 1881
though there are three or four very much better than others. De Serre was, except Chateaubriand, the only man with a streak of genius among the politicians of Louis XVIII.'s reign; and he had virtue and governing power, which that brilliant impostor had not. It seldom happens that parliamentary debates cut down to the bone, or tap the bed of principle. There are about half-a-dozen series of debates that do, because they constructed a system of government from the foundations—the French National Assembly, in 1789–1791 and 1848; Frankfort, in 1848; Belgium, in 1831; the French Parliament, after 1815, are among the rare instances. And in that latter instance the most eminent orator, the finest character, was De Serre. He stood nearly where Canning stood at that time—between the parties, disliked by both, persuaded, without the least prejudice or passion, that a strong monarchy was necessary in the levelled society of France, willing to make some sacrifice of strict principle in that cause, yet looking forward to better times, which he did not live to see, for his health broke down in 1822, and he died in 1824. One story will explain the man to you. In one of his speeches he laid down that the bulk of a representative assembly is almost always well meaning (an axiom of constitutional philosophy). Furious outcries from all the royalist benches interrupted him; shouts of: "Vous oubliez la Convention!" He answered: "Yes, even the Convention! (order! order!) . . . and if the Convention had not voted under the terror of assassins, France would have been spared the most terrible of crimes!"

Laveleye has great knowledge of Political Economy and of politics, and his peculiarity is that he does not

1881 think of party, or power, or wealth, but is thoroughly anxious about the condition of society. That separates him from orthodox Economists (Lowe, Mallet, Newmarch), who do not attend to the problem of Distribution, and are not made sleepless by the suffering and sorrow of the poor. He is slightly heterodox; what Germans call Kathedersozialist, and what even Maine would call downright Socialist. His chief work is an account of early forms of property, an indirect and rather confused plea for common property in land. Ingram,[1] Cliffe Leslie nearly represent him in England. He is a special enemy of the Catholic priesthood, like M. Frère-Orban, the Belgian minister, and Laurent of Ghent; but differs from them in the wish to give the people something better than negations. He has married a Protestant lady, and attends Protestant service; but whether from any dogmatic conviction, or as a bulwark against Ultramontanes, I am not sure. He is a very estimable man, well informed, earnest, slightly tiresome, and not at all original.

Don't mind coming to grief over parallels. A disposition to detect resemblances is one of the greatest sources of error. To me parallels afford a blaze of light, but they are rare, and hard to find.

. . . What you tell me of Mr. Gladstone's health is good news indeed; and I hope you will not listen to his regrets about a measure contrary to the law of freedom. As much authority as is wanted to protect the few against the many, or the weak against the strong, is not contrary to freedom, but the condition of freedom. The disease lies in society, not in the state. The other view, that the only dangerous enemy

[1] John K. Ingram, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and author of the article on Political Economy in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

a nation has is its government, is pure revolution, and was invented by St. Just. 1881

. . . . . .

Cannes March 7

When the accident[1] happened, the Cardwells had a favourable telegram from a friend of yours, and we learned the news and Paget's verdict together. You must have passed through terrible moments at first. But the best thing about it was your setting off to amuse yourself at Oxford. All England has been made to feel the truth of what you say, and Mr. Gladstone is almost the only man who does not ask the question: What is to be done if he is disabled?

I must give up my friend Sir Bartle at last. I thought he had courage and self-command; but he has been showing the mean spirit of recent Toryism in a way I did not suspect.

Your father's resolute adherence to principle, and his ascendency over weaker colleagues will be put to a grievous trial by the folly of the hapless Jingo[2] Wolseley bequeathed to the new government.

I had a cousin who travelled beyond the Vaal, and at last died there. He taught me to believe that the Boers were excellent fighting materials. But Sir Garnet pretends that they are liars and cowards, the only white race retrograding. So that Sir Bartle is not the only South African authority I must relinquish.

I hope you really like Sir James Paget. You know that he is one of my Blue Roses, and makes up for my manifold disbeliefs in great contemporaries. The author[3] of the novel just mentioned is here, and is

[1] Mr. Gladstone fell on the ice as he entered the gardens of Downing Street, and cut open the back of his head.

[2] Sir Bartle Frere, then Governor of Cape Colony.

[3] Miss Dempster.

1881 our amiable and hospitable neighbour. There has been such a Whip for Candahar that five people asked to pair with me. They are not, on the whole, interesting travellers, except one, with a handsome and overmarried wife. And we have had Sir Louis Mallet, very interesting, and very sound about Afghanistan.

I am just off to Rome, to bring my mother-in-law away, who has spent the winter there, and to see what ten years, and a new pope and new king have made of it. I am only allowed a week's holiday, and must crowd a good deal into it. The Sermons[1] will be my first resource when I come back next week. Thank you, beforehand, so very much for them. I did not guess the secret history, and, after your letter, the Arms Bill was a disappointment. When in England I convinced myself that there was, at that time, no threat of invasion or insurrection; but when I saw the Bill going on, I fancied "Endymion" might be right about that hidden danger.

. . . . . .

Your letter came in the middle of this one of mine, and I can hardly send a word of gratitude for such kindness. Until George Eliot I thought G. S.[2] the greatest writer of her sex in all literature. I cannot read her now. But that is individual taste, not deliberate judgment. She is as eloquent as one can be in French—the unreal, unhealthy eloquence that Rousseau brought in, that the Girondins spoke, that Chateaubriand, Lamennais, Lamartine made so popular, that nobody but Hugo strives after now, and that was modified in her case by Polish influences. Some of these Frenchmen live on nothing else; and if one plucks

[1] "Sermons in a College Chapel," by J. R. Illingworth.
[2] George Sand.

them, or puts their thoughts into one's own language, little remains. But she had passion, and understood it, and deep sympathy, and speculative thought, and the power—in less degree—of creating character. She could rise very high, for a moment, and her best prose is like a passage from good poets. It is a splendid exhibition, diffuse, ill-regulated, fatiguing, monotonous. There is not the mastery, the measure, the repose one learns from Goethe and the Greeks. She scatters over twenty volumes the resources her English rival concentrates into a chapter. There is beauty, but not wisdom; emotion, but not instruction; and, except in her wonderful eye for external nature, very little truth. I would call her a bad Second—such as Swinburne is to Shelley, or Heine to Schiller—comparisons which involve a great deal of disparagement. 1881

The conversation of those three great men[1] is very curious—I should have liked to see and hear them. . . . If, by chance, there was a message or a commission for Rome, I shall be at the H. d'Angleterre until next Monday.

Cannes March 25

Rome is the cause of all my delinquency. I remained a week, very ill with sunshine and south wind, but very happy, and supremely grateful for your letters and Illingworth's Sermons. Travellers' Rome is what it was; but in the real city the change is like the work of centuries. The religious activity and appearance that were of old are gone, and their place is usurped by things profane. The State has so thrown the Church into the background, that the Leonine city sleeps like a faded and deserted suburb, and one must look behind the scenes for what used to be

[1] Gladstone, Tennyson, and Paget.

1881 the glory and the pride of Rome. The bewildered Girondin[1] at the Vatican, who stands so well with the Castle,[2] I did not see, but heard much of his moderation, patience, and despair. I think he is the first Pope who has been wise enough to despair, and has felt that he must begin a new part, and steer by strange stars over an unknown sea.

I found a British ambassador devoid of political influence and understanding, but splendidly hospitable, and good-natured even to the friends of his own government. Layard, after serving the Court as a stick to beat Paget with, had left before I came. Almost all my time was spent with the two friends[3] whom you remember at a memorable examination at Venice, and seven days passed like hours. But why do I write all this? Am I not going to see you soon? I hear of a friendly yacht in the Mediterranean, and of his family accompanying the P.M. That can only mean embarkation at Cannes. It will be a joy for us indeed, and nothing shall be left undone to make your stay here as pleasant and as long as possible. You will not take long to understand that it is one of the sweetest spots in Europe. Let this be an assured element in all your Easter plans, that you will find here a haven of rest and friends not to be surpassed in affection by any elsewhere. Tell me what rooms to take at a neighbouring snug hotel. Or do you stay at Capodimonte? Nothing here spoken of must be to the detriment of six weeks with the Professor[4] at peaceful Tegernsee, between August and October.

Lecky seems to me to have composed unconscious of another tune running in his head. The likeness is

[1] Leo XIII.
[2] Dublin Castle.
[3] Minghetti and Bonghi.
[4] Dr. Döllinger.

greater in the description than in the reality. Chatham had public virtue, genius, energy, coupled with the magic power of transmitting it, the strength that comes with unselfish passion, and a grand way of spending popularity that others meanly hoard. He had few ideas, less instruction than Fox or Shelburne, too little political knowledge for a clear notion of his own place, of the stair he stood upon in history, or for any definite view of the English or European future. I admit no comparison,[1] except with the Burke of 1770–80. That early Burke would have made the peace with the Africanders, which is the noblest work of the Ministry. 1881

When you seem to doubt what I think of it, you mean that Coercion has robbed me of my footing in your confidence. Four weeks ago a very eminent foreigner wrote to me that the discovery of the Afghan papers would chill your father's Russian sympathies. After explaining that the discovery was not new for Ministers, I begged my friend to dismiss sympathies for principles, and to understand that there are in the world men who treat politics as the art of doing, on the largest scale, what is right; and I informed him that he would presently see peace made with the Boers on terms of great moderation, after disasters unavenged, in defiance of military indignation, in spite of lost prestige. You see that I knew what I was saying. Bearing in mind how strong a weapon of offence is thus given to enemies at home, considering the strength the offended feelings lately showed, and the weakness that lies in the attitude of the Government down to the time of our defeats, I declare that I rejoice in this inward victory with heartier joy and a purer pride than

[1] *i.e.*, of Mr. Gladstone.

1881 I have been able to feel at any public event since I broke my heart over the surrender of Lee.[1]

Carlyle's two volumes are crowded with grotesque eloquence, but they make him smaller in my eyes (nothing could make him worse). The account of Southey seems to me to do him less harm than the rest. "Common Sense" I read and recognised as Hayward. It seemed to me nearly true; but I thought the *Times* and *Temps* near the truth.

Your question about my injustice to Germany before 1840 touches a vital point, and you narrowly escape a very long answer. Scientific Germany was hardly born in all those years when Goethe, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Richter reigned. The real, permanent, commanding work of the nation has been done by a generation of men very many of whom I have known. To me it seemed that Carlyle spoke of great men before Agamemnon, and the bonfires that were good in the dark obscure the daylight.

And there would be much to say about the appreciation of the French and German genius, and the unpleasant reciprocity of chilled sympathy. But even if I could convince you of the fact, I do not know the reason. Let me only say, to prove that I am not fearful of giving you pain, that I think there is some want of method in his[2] pursuit of foreign literature. Things come to him by a sort of accident, are pressed on him by some occasion, and are taken up with absorbing vigour, not always with a distinct recognition of the book's place in its series, of the writer's place among other writers. That sort of knowledge can only be obtained

[1] Lord Acton said elsewhere of Lee—"The greatest general the world has ever seen, with the possible exception of Napoleon."

[2] Mr. Gladstone's.

by close and constant study of Reviews, by men having more patience than urgent steam pressure, by much indistinct groping and long suspense. This seems unreasonably confused; yet I think you will see what I mean by the time we have taken a walk over the hill of Californie,[1] from which you gaze on fifty miles of the Riviera. 1881

To-morrow I must be away from home; so I write in ignorance of your brother's speech on Candahar. I am sure, if he spoke on so good a subject, he justified Challemel. It will be a real privilege to hear Lowell discourse on Dante. I am sorry the *Paradiso*,[2] which is in the press, has not appeared. It is a good thing for all parties that Lowell should be linked by more than political chains.

The Sermons[3] have been unjustly taken by Wickham before I could read them; but I shall have them soon. I saw enough to justify all you said, in former letters. There is an originality about them which obliges one to think again before acquiescing in everything. The next number of the *Church Quarterly* will be very interesting to me. But there will be a dreadful cold shower-bath when the "Life"[4] appears.

"Consuelo" is a very great novel. Afterwards she[5] threw herself away on Monographs. I know that I don't like her; but I don't think I could ever have compared Miss Brontë or Miss Austen to her.

. . . . . .

Do you know an M.P. of the name of Lea? He is a rich Kidderminster carpet manufacturer, and is member, now, for Derry. I have seldom met a more

[1] At Cannes. [2] Scartazzini's.
[3] Illingworth's "In a College Chapel." [4] Of George Eliot.
[5] George Sand.

1881 thoughtful, intelligent, and satisfactory man. He has been to Aldenham, and I have stayed with him at Kidderminster, and thought him so sensible, so full of resource, that I should think him worth talking to about Ireland. . . . He was an Independent, and has, I think, conformed. Among your friends, apart from Whips, I should expect Bryce to know all about him. If he comes to a Tuesday I entreat you to remember that he has impressed me, and friends who are better judges than I, in a way not common among the people one meets in small provincial towns and societies. I have a good deal more to say, but I fancy it will lose nothing by waiting for the Paris Express. Meanwhile the great veil will be lifted from the Budget and the Sempronian Law,[1] and I await a rare excitement. Keep Cannes and Tegernsee steadily in view.

Cannes April 2 It was a short dream, but a pleasant one, not to be quite forgotten until Tegernsee fairly looms on us. Herbert's speech seems to me to deserve all the praise it brought him. That evening I met Henriquez, who spoke at Harrow during his canvass, and who says that as a speaker, apart from political experience and knowledge, he has nothing to learn. At the beginning the Skobeleff argument struck me as wanting a more elaborate introduction, but my doubt was soon dispelled. Please tell him, with my hearty congratulations, that the Roman empire perished for want of a good Land Bill. That criticism[2] which Palgrave has disinterred makes me think of the judge who was not tied to a stake, and of Roger Collard's answer when asked whether he had called Guizot an austere intriguer:

[1] Meaning the Irish Land Bill. The reference is to the agrarian laws of Tib. and C. Sempronius Gracchus.

[2] On Carlyle.

"I never said austere." *It* is rather a gift of inventing picturesque, and often grotesque epithets and nicknames, than general power of expression. The sentences are seldom good, and not comparable to those of the faithful Ruskin. But the man who called Stanley a body-snatcher deserves a monument in Westminster Abbey. 1881

You must have snubbed —— at Lady Reay's. Or did he think you laughed at him? That, you know, is a possible error. There is no doubt that the opinion others have of us is one of the very many sources of subtle error in our judgments which have grown into such a prodigious catalogue since Bacon feebly began to enumerate them. People who study them, and stand on their guard against this particular temptation, fall easily by identifying themselves with their principles. It is almost an axiom in controversy that to attack one's adversary personally is to confess disbelief in one's cause, where doctrine and not conduct is in question. And I do see men who are personally attacked, conclude that their adversary is dishonest and knows that he is in the wrong. On the other hand, there is an institution in London founded on the belief that private acquaintance and good-fellowship softens the asperity of public conflicts. You know about Grillion's, where men dine without quarrelling, and where, by a pleasant fiction, no bore is supposed to live. There the effect is what your father says. People make opponents like them, and soften to their opponents, in consequence.

I write under the shadow of Disraeli's illness. Our last accounts are very threatening; and I, who think that the worst part of the man was his cause, and who liked him better than the mass of his party, look with dismay on the narrowness and the passion of those who

1881 will succeed him. He, at least, if he had no principles or scruples, had no prejudices or superstitions or fanaticism. You have heard it said of —— that he would have been a good fellow, if he had not been a drunkard, a liar, and a thief. With a few allowances . . . a good deal may be said for the Tory leader who made England a Democracy. One must make so much allowance for so many public men besides Midhat.[1]

The Pope[2] probably had no clear view about policy. If he had, he would hardly be Pope. But he sees that the old spells have lost their power over men, and so he gives them up. It does not yet appear whether he knows that the power is gone for ever; but visibly, for the time, he is trying new arts, and endeavours to restore, by conciliation and management, what Pius ruined by authority. The attempt to disengage himself from the crash of the Legitimists is the most remarkable instance of the change. He explains that the Church must not be so committed to any political party as to stand or fall with it. But that has been, since 1849, the entirely unvarying policy of Rome, and has forced all the enemies of absolute power to turn their forces against Catholicism. If once the two things are separated, there will be a great change in the position of things in Europe. If the Pope does not maintain Legitimacy he gives up the temporal power. He has no legal or political claim to Rome that Chambord has not to France, for arguments derived from Canon Law are without validity in politics. By weakening his one resource, he shows that he thinks the game is up. And then there is no insuperable obstacle to reconciliation with the Powers. Solicitude for temporal sovereignty

[1] Midhat Pacha was the head of the reforming party in Turkey at that time.

[2] Leo XIII.

has been the cause of all the faults and disasters of our Church since the murder of Rossi.[1] To surrender it implies such a conversion that I shall not believe in it till I see clearer signs; for his chief confidant is the Archbishop of Capua, an old friend of mine, who is what Newman would be without his genius, his eloquence, and his instruction. 1881

I don't know where to stop. Capua is a bad stopping place.

Cannes Palm Sunday April 10

Don't mind my weak handwriting and brief letter, but I have spent most of this great parliamentary week in bed, and this is my first attempt to write.

I so much want to hear from you that your father is well and happy. The achievement seems incomparable, and the policy wonderful.[2] But I am too confused in mind yet to understand the whole thing and the flight of the Thane.[3] Probably it has been long foreseen, and is taken almost as a victory from coming alone. It portends tremendous opposition in the Lords, unless Derby has succeeded him,[4] and even then. I have seen nothing but the *Times*—stormy weather delaying all English papers; and I read the peroration to my family as explaining why the speaker is in my eyes so much the best of statesmen. I wonder what an intelligent Socialist would make of the sentence which says that the Irish landlords would have been guilty of injustice by appropriating the results of tenant labour in improvement of the soil. In a rough and ready way

[1] November 15, 1848. After the murder of Count Rossi, his Liberal Minister of the Interior, Pius IX. left Rome, and fled to Gaeta, from which he only returned under the protection of French bayonets.

[2] The introduction of the Irish Land Bill.

[3] The late Duke of Argyll's resignation.

[4] Lord Carlingford succeeded him.

1881 they might apply the maxim to manufactories too. Then comes an extract from the ninth paragraph of the Bessbro' Report to the effect that Irish rents are lower than English, which might, I fancy, serve when they try to stop the way by getting up an agrarian movement in this country. I should add, having been so recalcitrant, that the Court ought to be able to effect what is substantially just in the Irish claims. I don't much believe in peasant proprietorship; but I should like much done for emigration, and have not been converted from what he said about that in 1845. The threatening close of the eleventh[1] Budget speech must not, I hope, be taken literally—not only because the Budget, laid down on partly Tory lines, is not a very great one; partly because the speech is full of promise and suggestion, and even menace; also because the only successor whose succession would not seriously weaken the Ministry, Goschen, declared his resolution not to join it when he returns. . . .

You will not have had time to read French newspapers and academic speeches. They elected Rousse,[2] a lawyer, not famous, but much trusted by the expelled monks. Falloux was not ashamed to say to me: "au moins, c'est un honnête homme—chose précieuse aujourd'hui." His speech was an exquisite composition. But d'Aumale, in his reply, said that Cicero was a much better man than Demosthenes—in politics. I hope that sentiment would vex your father, the one man who has the right to pronounce between them. A good historian says of Demosthenes: "Er war Idealist und uberschätzte in gefahrvollen Zeiten die Wirkung sittlicher Kräfte."

I am anxiously watching the change of Ministry in

[1] Mr. Gladstone's eleventh.

[2] To the Academy.

Italy, where I saw this mischief brewing so lately. A worse administration than the present seemed to me almost inconceivable. They avowed the doctrine that there is no resisting the priesthood except by definite Spencerianism; and that whatever is given to God goes to the Pope. . . . 1881

. . . Your welcome and consoling handwriting quickly followed by the appearance of Wolverton fresh from home, brought me all I was wishing for almost as soon as my letter was gone. Thank you so much for knowing so well what one is thinking of. *La Madeleine April 14*

We rather expect Argyll to take refuge here too during these holidays.

The *Pall Mall* is worth anything for its concentrated essence of opinion. Much of this is stupid. But the accusation begun by Argyll—that the measure abandons the old lines on which the Liberal party won its battles, introduces new principles not tested yet by the experience of nations, and begins, in short, a new departure—is one that will be urged with great force and some truth, and it will not do to disguise the magnitude of the change. The suspicion that the P.M. was changing on the two[1] greatest of all political questions comes true after all; and I wonder which of the twenty-two texts was in the ascendant when I thought myself convicted of false prophecy!

I don't feel to know how much German Herbert reads, for I don't rely on what he picked up at Tegernsee. But I want to draw his attention, if it avails, to one literary matter.

Within the last ten or twelve years there has been a wonderful change in political economy in the

[1] See p. 48.

1881 direction of which Laveleye, Ingram, Cliffe Leslie are popular exponents, and which Sherbrooke and Bonamy Price anathematise. The essential point is the history and analysis of property in land. It is important that our people should be exactly acquainted with these views and results before the debate comes on. Two volumes contain all that it is necessary to read:—Roscher, *National oekonomik des Ackerbaus*, and Wagner's *Grundlegung der Volkswirthschaft*.

He that has read these two books knows a good deal about the lines on which Society is moving that he cannot well discover elsewhere.

. . . . . .

You will not agree with me in rejoicing that Cairns[1] has done himself so much credit at the same moment when Salisbury has injured himself seriously by his offer of Tunisian hush money. All this is a misfortune for the Italians, as they cannot have a reasonable Ministry with the present Parliament, and the circle is closing round them. Perhaps it will teach them to dismiss ambition.

Punch's Irish landlord spoils a very old Italian story. The poet Mortola, out of envy, shot at another poet and missed him. He had to get relieved of his excommunication by the Pope, and his confession was: "E vero, Santo Padre, ho fallito."[2] . . .

Cannes April 24 I am not sure that there is any quite available and compendious answer to the two reproaches of setting the poor against the rich, and of giving power to those least fit for it. There lurks in each an atom of inevitable truth; and the sententious arguments which serve to dazzle people at elections may generally be met by

[1] The first Lord Cairns.

[2] "It is true, Holy Father, I have failed."

epigrams just as sparkling and as sound on the other side. Politics are so complex that almost every act may be honestly seen in very different lights; and I can imagine so strong a case against our African policy as to drive from his moorings any man not well anchored in justice. 1881

Assuming that the first objection culminates in Midlothian: it was necessary to bring home to the constituencies, to needy and ignorant men, the fact that Society, the wealthy ruling class, that supported our late Mazarin[1] in clubs and drawing-rooms, was ready to spend the treasure and the blood of the people in defence of an infamous tyranny,[2] to gratify pride, the love of authority, and the lust of power. Nearly the same situation arose in Ireland, and in other questions not so urgent. Secondly, as to Democracy, it is true that masses of new electors are utterly ignorant, that they are easily deceived by appeals to prejudice and passion, and are consequently unstable, and that the difficulty of explaining economic questions to them, and of linking their interests with those of the State, may become a danger to the public credit, if not to the security of private property. A true Liberal, as distinguished from a Democrat, keeps this peril always before him.

The answer is, that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs—that politics are not made up of artifices only, but of truths, and that truths have to be told.

We are forced, in equity, to share the government with the working class by considerations which were made supreme by the awakening of political economy. Adam Smith set up two propositions—that contracts

[1] Lord Beaconsfield.

[2] The Sultan's.

1881 ought to be free between capital and labour, and that labour is the source, he sometimes says the only source, of wealth. If the last sentence, in its exclusive form, was true, it was difficult to resist the conclusion that the class on which national prosperity depends ought to control the wealth it supplies, that is, ought to govern instead of the useless unproductive class, and that the class which earns the increment ought to enjoy it. That is the foreign effect of Adam Smith—French Revolution and Socialism. We, who reject that extreme proposition, cannot resist the logical pressure of the other. If there is a free contract, in open market, between capital and labour, it cannot be right that one of the two contracting parties should have the making of the laws, the management of the conditions, the keeping of the peace, the administration of justice, the distribution of taxes, the control of expenditure, in its own hands exclusively. It is unjust that all these securities, all these advantages, should be on the same side. It is monstrous that they should be all on the side that has least urgent need of them, that has least to lose. Before this argument, the ancient dogma, that power attends on property, broke down. Justice required that property should—not abdicate, but—share its political supremacy. Without this partition, free contract was as illusory as a fair duel in which one man supplies seconds, arms, and ammunition.

That is the flesh and blood argument. That is why Reform, full of questions of expediency and policy in detail, is, in the gross, not a question of expediency or of policy at all; and why some of us regard our opponents as men who should imagine sophisms to avoid keeping promises, paying debts, or speaking truths.

They will admit much of my theory, but then they 1881
will say, like practical men, that the ignorant classes cannot understand affairs of state, and are sure to go wrong. But the odd thing is that the most prosperous nations in the world are both governed by the masses —France and America. So there must be a flaw in the argument somewhere. The fact is that education, intelligence, wealth are a security against certain faults of conduct, not against errors of policy. There is no error so monstrous that it fails to find defenders among the ablest men. Imagine a congress of eminent celebrities, such as More, Bacon, Grotius, Pascal, Cromwell, Bossuet, Montesquieu, Jefferson, Napoleon, Pitt, &c. The result would be an Encyclopædia of Error. They would assert Slavery, Socialism, Persecution, Divine Right, military despotism, the reign of force, the supremacy of the executive over legislation and justice, purchase in the magistracy, the abolition of credit, the limitation of laws to nineteen years, &c. If you were to read Walter Scott's pamphlets, Southey's Colloquies, Ellenborough's Diary, Wellington's Despatches—distrust of the select few, of the chosen leaders of the community, would displace the dread of the masses. The danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern. Every class is unfit to govern. The law of liberty tends to abolish the reign of race over race, of faith over faith, of class over class. It is not the realisation of a political ideal: it is the discharge of a moral obligation. However that may be, the transfer of power to the lower class was not the act of Mr. Gladstone, but of the Conservatives in 1867. It still requires to be rectified and regulated; but I am sure that in his hands, the change would have been less violent.

1881 Nor do I admit the other accusation, of rousing class animosities. The upper class used to enjoy undivided sway, and used it for their own advantage, protecting their interests against those below them, by laws which were selfish and often inhuman. Almost all that has been done for the good of the people has been done since the rich lost the monopoly of power, since the rights of property were discovered to be not quite unlimited. Think not only of the Corn Laws, but of the fact that the State did nothing for primary education fifty years ago. The beneficent legislation of the last half century has been due to the infusion of new elements in the electoral body. Success depended on preventing the upper class from recovering their lost ground, by keeping alive in the masses the sense of their responsibility, of their danger, of the condition from which they had been rescued, of the objects still before them, and the ancient enemy behind. Liberal policy has largely consisted in so promoting this feeling of self-reliance and self-help, that political antagonism should not degenerate into social envy, that the forces which rule society should be separate from the forces which rule the state. No doubt the line has not always been broadly marked between Liberalism where it borders on Radicalism, and Radicalism where it borders on the Charter. Some reproach may visit Bright and Mill, but not Mr. Gladstone. If there were no Tories, I am afraid he would invent them. He has professed himself a decided Inequalitarian.[1] I cannot discover that he has ever caressed the notion of progressive taxation. Until last year I don't think he ever admitted that we have to legislate not quite impartially for the whole nation, but for a class so numerous as to be

[1] See Diary in Ruskin's "Letters to M. and H. G." (privately printed).

virtually equal to the whole. He dispels the conflict of classes by cherishing the landed aristocracy, and making the most of it in office. He has granted the Irish landlords an absolution ampler than they deserve. Therefore, though I admit that the condition of English society tends in some measure to make the poor regard the rich as their enemies, and that the one inveterate obstacle to the welfare of the masses is the House of Lords, yet I must add that he whose mission it is to overcome that interested resistance has been scrupulous not to excite passionate resentment, and to preserve what he cannot correct. And I do not say it altogether in his praise. 1881

It is the law of party government that we contend on equal terms, and claim no privilege. We assume the honesty of our opponents, whatever we think or know. Kenealy and Bradlaugh must be treated with consideration, like Wilberforce or Macaulay. We do not use private letters, reported conversations, newspaper gossip, or scandals revealed in trials to damage troublesome politicians. We deal only with responsibility for public acts. But with these we must deal freely. We have to keep the national conscience straight and true, and if we shrink from doing this because we dare not cast obloquy on class or party or institution, then we become accomplices in wrongdoing, and very possibly in crime.

We ought not to employ vulgar imputations, that men cling to office, that they vote against their convictions, that they are not always consistent, &c. All that is unworthy of imperial debate. But where there is a question of unjust war, or annexation, of intrigue, of suppressed information, of mismanagement in matters of life and death, of disregard for suffering,

1881 we are bound to gibbet the offender before the people of England, and to make the rude workman understand and share our indignation against the grandee. Whether he ought, after that, to be left to Dean Stanley[1] is another question.

But I am not surprised at the complaint you heard. To many people the idea is repugnant that there is a moral question at the bottom of politics. They think that it is only by great effort and the employment of every resource that property and religion can be maintained. If you embarrass their defence with unnecessary rules and scruples, you risk defeat, and set up a rather arbitrary and unsanctioned standard above the interest of their class or of their church. Such men are not at their ease with the Prime Minister, especially if he is against them, and even when they are on his side. I am thinking of Argyll in Lytton's first debate; of Kimberley always; of soldiers and diplomatists generally.

Whilst you find Conservatives surprised at the moderation of the Bill, I have had the pleasure of meeting two members of the Government who think it goes much too far. And now the papers announce two more impending secessions.[2] I really don't know what is to become of us in the Lords.

The *Pall Mall* résumés of Lord Beaconsfield have been intensely interesting. None seemed to me too severe, but some were shocking at the moment. He was quite remarkable enough to fill a column of Éloge. Some one wrote to me yesterday that no Jew for 1800 years has played so great a part in the world. That would be no Jew since St. Paul; and it is very startling. But, putting aside literature, and therefore Spinoza

[1] For burial in the Abbey.

[2] Lord Lansdowne's and Lord Listowel's.

and Heine, almost simultaneously with Disraeli, a converted Jew, Stahl, a man without birth or fortune, became the leader of the Prussian Conservative and aristocratic party. He led them from about 1850 to 1860, when he died; and he was intellectually far superior to Disraeli—I should say, the greatest reasoner that has ever served the Conservative cause. But he never obtained power, or determined any important event. Lassalle died after two years of agitation. Benjamin,[1] the soul of the Confederate ministry, now rising to the first rank of English lawyers, had too short and too disastrous a public career. In short, I have not yet found an answer. 1881

I think, failing sons and secretaries, it is really important that the P.M. should set somebody in Downing Street to read Wagner's *Grundlegung*. It would be a great advantage to an outsider if he were to get it up, and to know exactly where the agrarian question now stands in Europe, both as to theory and practice. It is an exceedingly able, bold, and original book, and the author occupies, at Berlin, the first chair of Pol. Economy in Germany. I would even venture to ask you to mention it to him, as flotsam from the Riviera.

La Madeleine April 30

Like you I am sorry for the omission[2] on Monday, and for the sequel to it next week. The homage of the House in which he was so long distinguished was due to Disraeli, and it would have been a fit occasion for a panegyric which might have appeared natural and

[1] Judah Philip Benjamin, Q.C., author of "Benjamin on Sales." He left America after the defeat of the South, and attained great distinction at the English Bar.

[2] Mr. Gladstone did not arrive in time after the Easter recess to give notice of his own motion for a public memorial to Lord Beaconsfield, who died on the 19th of April 1881. The notice was given on Mr. Gladstone's behalf by Lord Richard Grosvenor, now Lord Stalbridge.

1881 informal. The Monument is a homage paid by the nation, demanding more than parliamentary or other intellectual distinction, and implying public service of some exceptional merit and amount. This is wanting in Disraeli. And we deem not only that the good was absent, but that the bad, the injurious, the immoral, the disgraceful was present on a large scale. Let us praise his genius, his wit, his courage, his patience and constancy in adversity, his strength of will, his originality and independence of mind, the art with which he learned to be eloquent, his occasional largeness of conception, his frequent good nature and fidelity to friends, his readiness of resource, his considerable literary culture, his skill in the management of a divided and reluctant party, even his superiority to the greed of office; let us even call him the greatest Jewish minister since Joseph—but if we say that he deserved the gratitude of the nation, and might claim his reward from every part of it, I am afraid we condemn ourselves. This feeling will certainly be expressed out of doors, if not in the House, and will not only mar the general effect, but will almost seem to have been provoked, by the formality and the postponement. Its existence in any considerable measure is a reason against doing what offends many consciences, and is gracious only when all but unanimous. Personally it will be a great opportunity for your father. I am afraid I deplore it from every other point of view.

. . . . . .

Here is Lord Morley going home to-morrow, and much to be envied. If you see him, he will tell you that Cannes is a very nice place indeed. I see, by the way things are going, that the Land Bill is pretty safe in the Commons; but I wonder how

much ascendency Northcote has with his colleagues elsewhere. . . . 1881

The defect of the argument is that it will neither wear nor wash. It cannot be employed in public. Nobody can say:—"I who overthrew Lord Beaconsfield's ministry, reversed his policy, persuaded the nation to distrust him, and brought his career to a dishonoured end—I who, altogether disagreeing with a certain friend of mine, thought his doctrines false, but the man more false than his doctrine; who believe that he demoralised public opinion, bargained with diseased appetites, stimulated passions, prejudices, and selfish desires, that they might maintain his influence; that he weakened the Crown by approving its unconstitutional leanings, and the Constitution by offering any price for democratic popularity,—who, privately, deem him the worst and most immoral minister since Castlereagh, and have branded him with a stigma such as no other public man has deserved in my time,—nevertheless proceed, in my public capacity, to lock my true sentiments in my breast, and declare him worthy of a reward that was not paid to Fox or to Canning; worthy not only of the tribute due to talents, efficiency, and courage, but of enduring gratitude and honour; and I do it because I am not the leader of the nation, but the appointed minister of its will; because it is my office to be the mouthpiece of opinions I disapprove, to obey an impulse I condemn, to execute the popular wishes when they contradict my own."

La Madeleine May 7

That is a position which cannot be held, a motive impossible to avow. But then there is no answer to Labouchere when he recalls the scathing denunciations of

1881 last year and asks "whether they were seriously meant, or whether, having served their purpose, they have been abandoned and committed to oblivion; whether the Prime Minister declares their injustice and invites the country to join him in making reparation, whether the responsibilities of power have effected the usual transformation from the exigencies of electioneering agitation, and whether we are to understand that the career of Lord Beaconsfield appears in a different light to those who have inherited his difficulties and have learned to appreciate his aims, from that which blazed on so many platforms. If the Rt. Honble. gentleman maintains his maledictions, if his soul is still vexed by the memory of disgraceful peace and disgraceful war, of tyranny protected, of bloodshed unavenged, then let him not forget the picture which he drew, which still dwells in the hearts of millions; the praise that comes from the lips that uttered those burning words must be hollow, for the soul cannot be there; it would be better that he left the task to more congenial hands, to some who could speak from the fulness of the heart, to some less prominent critic of Tory policy, to some less austere apostle of national duty."

The nation, it is true, supported Lord Beaconsfield, but the same nation also very decidedly condemned and rejected him. The author of the rejection is the worst possible mouthpiece of the former approval. And in a question which is really one of morals everybody must judge and act for himself. If the degradation of public principle spread from Lord Beaconsfield to his party, and from them to the Liberals, to whom are we to look for a stricter spirit and a loftier standard? Is it for him who, as a volunteer, stemmed the tide of corruption, to ride on it now that all authority, moral, political,

personal, is concentrated in him? No doubt, the opposition will be overdone; but there are materials which a light and skilful hand, P. J. Smyth, for instance, might use with telling force. 1881

I will propose a double Cartoon: The P.M. proposing the monument, correct, slightly white-chokered, wearing what Whiteside called his oratorical face, making the splendour of words do duty for realities—and the Philippic Demosthenes of Midlothian rousing the sleepy Lion with tumultuous argument and all the unceremonious energy of a deep conviction.

As to Lord Granville's motion on the same subject, I am not sorry to be out of the way of it.

To "sweep away" the House of Lords would be a terrible revolution. The more truly the House of Commons comes to represent the real nation, the more it must fall under the influence of opinion out of doors. It has less and less a substantive and independent will of its own, and serves as a barometer to register the movement going on outside. Now the opinion of a whole nation differs from that of any limited or united or homogeneous class by its inconstancy. It is not pervaded by one common interest, trained to the same level, or inspired by one set of ideas. It is rent by contending motives, and its ideas cannot get a firm grip because there is nothing solid to lay hold of. The whole is not more sure to go wrong than a part, but it is sure not to go long the same way. This sort of fluctuation which is unavoidable in the nation has to be kept out of the state, for it would destroy its credit, its influence abroad, and its authority at home. Therefore, the more perfect the representative system, the more necessary is some other aid to stability. Six or

1881 seven such aids have been devised, and we unite three of them in our House of Lords—Primogeniture, Established Church, and an independent judiciary. Its note is Constancy—the wish to carry into the future the things of the past, the capacity to keep aloof from the strife and aims of the passing hour. As we have none of the other resources proper to unmixed governments, a real veto, a federation of states, or a constitution above the legislature, we must treasure the one security we possess. A single assembly has an immense preponderance of authority and experience against it. Chamberlain would soon bring it under the control of instructions, that is, would convert it into a democratic engine, and the empire, I apprehend, would go to pieces.

The worst anybody can imagine is a modification of the House of Lords, such as would make it less independent, less affected by tradition, less united in one interest, but more intelligent and, probably, more powerful. That seems to me possible, though difficult, and uncertain and hazardous in an infinite degree. I do not plead for this, but I cannot set myself absolutely and irrevocably against it. The House of Lords represents one great interest—land. A body that is held together by a common character and has common interests is necessarily disposed to defend them. Individuals are accessible to motives that do not reach multitudes, and may be on their guard against themselves. But a corporation, according to a profound saying, has neither body to kick nor soul to save. The principle of self-interest is sure to tell upon it. The House of Lords feels a stronger duty towards its eldest sons than towards the masses of ignorant, vulgar, and greedy people. Therefore, except

under very perceptible pressure, it always resists measures aimed at doing good to the poor. It has been almost always in the wrong—sometimes from prejudice and fear and miscalculation, still oftener from instinct and self-preservation. Generally it does only a temporary injury, and that is its plea for existence. But the injury may be irreparable. And if we have manifest suffering, degradation, and death on one side, and the risk of a remodelled senate on the other, the certain evil outweighs the contingent danger. For the evil that we apprehend cannot be greater than the evil we know. 1881

I hope the Drawing-room was not very cloudy. Why did not you sit next Lord Granville? He would have been less deaf.

. . . . . .

. . . The arrest of Dillon will produce its effect in the House and on the action of his colleagues, and may be a source of new difficulties. But I cannot find fault with it, not even with the prosecution of Most,[1] although Harcourt is in disgrace. . . . —— takes the line natural in a newspaper, and does not choose to distinguish murder from insurrection—a besetting sin of democrats.

Tegernsee June 3

. . . I thought his[2] speech on the 2nd Reading[3] admirable, but for the allusion[4] to the larger measure the Tories would have to bring in, which might put Shaw & Co. into some difficulty.

They say that Lenbach has gone on painting him, and has succeeded admirably, but that the likeness is severe and depressing.

[1] Convicted at the Old Bailey for incitement to the murder of the German Emperor. [2] Mr. Gladstone's. [3] Of the Irish Land Bill.

[4] Mr. Gladstone predicted that, if the Conservatives defeated the Bill and came into office, they would themselves introduce not a smaller, but a larger measure.

1881 Lord Granville told me of his Roman troubles, and I had to give an opinion, which was not that of the importunate widow. But a representative so foolish and so hostile would have been more dangerous at St. Petersburg than at Rome, where he is only throwing away the mighty influence of your father's name, but where there is not critical interest at stake. Lord G. seems to me to have done well about Tunis; but I am sorry I wasted my eulogy on B. St. Hilaire.

The *Contemporary* was very interesting. There was a saying of Carlyle that Germany had produced nothing since Goethe, which confirmed what I said to you about the limit of his information. I don't know who Shirley[1] is; but the small divine[2] amused me very much, and his article would have been just and good if it had not ended by implying that the judgment of the late elections settles the question of right—a sentiment fit for Gambetta and the punch-drinking politicians of Cahors.

You asked me the other day a perplexing question, suggested, less by the loss in the house of your friend, than by the observation that men are passionately fond of talking about themselves, and practising autobiographical arts. My answer must be what you anticipated. Being refused at Cambridge, and driven to foreign universities, I never had any contemporaries, but spent years in looking for men wise enough to solve the problems that puzzled me, not in religion or politics so much as along the wavy line between the two. So I was always associated with men a generation older than myself, most of whom died early—for me—and all of whom impressed me with the same moral, that

[1] Sir John Skelton, K.C.B., author of "Thalassa," Scottish disciple of Disraeli, a brilliant and scholarly writer. [2] Canon Maccoll.

one must do one's learning and thinking for oneself, without expecting short cuts or relying on other men. And that led to the elaborate detachment, the unamiable isolation, the dread of personal influences, which you justly censure. 1881

Please write that censure is not anger, and tell me what you are all doing, what the prospects are, how much social trouble you take, and whether you liked Matthew Arnold and his airs. . . .

Your letter has been indeed a joy in the midst of trouble.[1] You have understood so much of what it is hard to write. . . .

. . . . . .

She has taken with her one of the strongest links that attached me to this world, but I do not follow less keenly the movements of the man who, of all now living, has the greatest power of doing good. The Irish speech on Friday, and the economic speech on Saturday, made the strongest impression on me. *Munich Oct. 15*

I fancy the man who attacked the calculation of national profit in the latter, misunderstood his own case, and might have made something of it if he had spoken of the distribution, not of the increase of wealth. The treatment of Home Rule as an idea conceivably reasonable, which was repeated at Guildhall, delighted me. I felt less sure of the distinction between that as a colourable scheme, and the Land League, as now working, as one altogether revolutionary and evil. At least, the censure and arrest of Parnell made me regret more than ever the monument and the eulogy of Disraeli. But then, you know that that is my favourite heresy.

[1] The death of a little daughter.

1881 What has most struck me in these speeches of the Recess is that they do almost more than the parliamentary oratory to make the whole country familiar with Mr. Gladstone's ways of thought, and to stamp his mind on the nation. I fear they must be fatiguing to him, because I have always thought that he found an intellectual audience most easy to deal with. In the Palmerstonian days I remember your brother[1] asking me at Twickenham what I thought of our prospects; and I answered that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not water his wine enough. And I believe he thought me a fool. But it was quite true: he tried to make us understand his figures, in the House; but he did not much unfold his thoughts for the public; and I used to be surprised to find that men who knew him well, Lord Granville, Argyll,[2] S. Wilberforce, saw neither the connection nor the consequence of his ideas. This is so much altered now, that he does not dislike to sit for his mental portrait, and his philosophy of government is the study of thousands. So he is moulding the mind of the nation as no man ever did.

I wonder whether you will have patience to talk to me about him at Cannes? We are just starting for the Madeleine, through Switzerland. . . .

. . . . . .

La Madeleine Oct. 27 What might, possibly, be done in a moment of triumph,[3] would be desertion and disaster to the party at any other moment. Nobody can hope that next Easter, or for a couple of years, we can be altogether crowned with laurel. In the presence of Mr. Gladstone

[1] W. H. Gladstone, M.P. [2] The late Duke of Argyll.
[3] Mr. Gladstone's retirement.

himself the Tories are recovering spirits. They would take a leap forward if Achilles was safe in his tent. 1881

That is so clear to any one looking below the surface that it suggests another objection—there might be an appearance of retreat at the first turning of the tide, of an inclination to escape, individually, from a prospect of losing battles and declining prosperity, and to leave others to face the renewal of disintegration and reaction, such as we saw in 1873. I know that this is not a consideration where duty is visibly concerned; but it is a valid consideration where policy is concerned. And it must be remembered that he may resign office but cannot abandon power.

Herbert's constituents[1] were probably more deeply impressed than I was by the repeated, but too suggestive, eulogy on Hartington and Lord Granville. Has Mr. Gladstone fairly faced the question, What will the party do without him? I may quote my own sentiment, because I grew up among Russells, Ellices, Byngs; and though I am very suspicious of early impressions and of doctrines unaccounted for, I know I am much more favourable to the great Whig connection, to the tradition of Locke and Somers, Adam Smith and Burke and Macaulay, than Mr. Gladstone would like. Yet it would seem dust and ashes, but for him. . . . The idea that politics is an affair of principle, that it is an affair of morality, that it touches eternal interests as much as vices and virtues do in private life, that idea will not live in the party. Indeed it is already overshadowed by the Beaconsfield monument, described by that prophet, Pope.[2]

Besides, the party would become unable, from internal divisions, to govern the country. I take the letter to

[1] At Leeds.

[2] "Like some tall bully, lifts its head and lies."

1881 be a recognition of the fact that the P.M. ought to be in the House of Commons. In that case it is on the cards that Lord Granville would retire at the same time. Where should we be in the Lords, if neither Argyll, nor Derby, nor Lord G. sat on the Treasury Bench; if Northbrook, Carlingford, and Kimberley were left to face Salisbury and Cairns? And then, if Selborne resigns the woolsack, and it becomes necessary to choose a Chancellor for his debating power? The future is as gloomy in the Commons with Bright and your father away, Goschen out of office, Hartington liable, any day, to leave it. In both cases we come to the level of mediocrity; we depend on the second rank. . . .

The new constituency gives increased weight to the Democratic leaders, and it will be impossible for the Whigs to control them or to do without them. They will force their programme on the party by keeping it out of office until they prevail. This must come sooner or later. But Mr. Gladstone ought not to retire until he has provided for the future of the party he has remodelled. With respect to persons, if he does not bring Derby and Goschen in, nobody else can. As to Goschen—whose position will be a considerable one, as the best financier of the party, afterwards—it has been unfortunate that the overtures were not made by the P.M. himself. They would have been far more flattering; probably also more clear and definite. The measure[1] he objects to is considerably postponed. The way is crowded with bills on which he agrees with ministers.

As to Derby, I hope to learn all about your visit,[2] how you get on with her, and whether you all took

[1] The County Franchise Bill. [2] To Knowsley.

care to acknowledge her good influence and services. 1881
There will never be any great intimacy between him and your father. But, in his proper place, he could be made very useful.

There is something graver than the question of persons. There is his own Church policy, the Eastern —especially Egyptian and Armenian question, the decentralisation of H. of Commons business, redistribution of seats, and ever so much more. I should like him to see more of the Prince of Wales,[1] that something of his influence should survive in the Royal Family. And his present power is such that there will be a real failure in his career if he retires without employing it to secure the future of the party. It would be wasting or burying the fortune of Rothschild, the most enormous capital ever collected in one hand.

The resistance to G. Eliot, the preference for Scott, the desire to confide in ——, are all one and the same thing: idealism. When Disraeli sat down exclaiming, "The time will come when you will hear me," his neighbour slapped him on the back and said, "So they will." That encouraging neighbour was ——. He can never take to a man of strong principle and purpose. He is little better than a vague Jingo: and he is the most indiscreet, and not the most accurate of men. To trust him with such a secret is like rejecting G. Eliot as cynical, gloomy, and uncharitable in her views of life. A man can be trusted only up to low-water mark. There is just one thing on which the P.M. is wilfully a little superficial!

Private Secretaries have no time for letters of their own; otherwise I think with pleasure of your new occupation. Don't let it tire you. In many ways it

[1] The King.

1881 will interest you; and J. S. Mill would highly have approved of it, as portending an end to the subjection of women.

Please let me beg that you will not read anonymous communications. If you receive any, I think they ought to go to the police. Not, of course, to Mr. Gladstone. What he does not mind himself might worry him being sent to you.

La Madeleine Nov. 9

I am sorry to have lost the Knowsley letters, as I know something of your accounts of country houses. The envelope raised expectations which added to my disappointment; for there was no danger that the dulness of the company would affect the record. The newspaper list of visitors surprised me. . . .

The point, however, is the good impression which Derby made during their walk, as there was no previous liking.

Your suggestion of a visit to Hawarden is as tempting as it is kind. I should like nothing so much if I thought it suited Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone; but at this moment I am wanted, sadly wanted, here; and the ingenious indiscretion of somebody has provoked a demonstration more impressive than any arguments of mine. It has shown what the triumph of the Tories, what the helplessness of the Liberals would be. Mr. Gladstone must see now that his resolution must depend on facts, and not on wishes. What he is to the cause and the party I fear he will never understand.

Touching the future, I can abate nothing of what I said. It is odd, especially for me to say, who often disagree with him in maxims if not in aims, but you undervalue him in comparison with other men. Is it the

strife in the Cabinet, the defection of friends, the zeal of opponents, the slow growth of results, the versatility of popular feeling, the coldness of Continental opinion, that depresses you? or is it Morley's book?[1] T. B. Potter has just arrived, I hope with a copy for me. I see from the extracts that it is a piece of very superior work. At first I expected an oblique attack on your father, as a dilatory and inconsistent convert, prompted by Cobden's long distrust, by Bright's early denunciations, by the aversion of literal economists, of Equalitarian Democrats, of stubborn unbelievers in those qualities which raise him above the highest level of Liberalism. But I can fancy that you might be impressed by so vigorous, sincere, and complete a system of politics very distinct from his own. The lieutenants of Alexander, Napoleon and his Marshals, are the only fit comparisons to describe the interval between the P.M. and the best of those who come next to him. 1881

We lose a weak, an ornamental, an unstable, but patriotic man in ——. As he has been the guiltiest misleader in ecclesiastical questions, his retirement is appropriate at the moment when we are trying to get the ear of the Pope. There are, of course, better reasons for that just now than the state of Ireland, and I think he (the Pope) deserves the kind of help it must give him. His impulses seem almost always right, whilst his execution, depending on others, and requiring force of character as well as good intentions, is generally poor and shabby. If the Powers had been quicker to understand how strongly he contrasts with his predecessor they might have enabled him to prevail against his court.

John O'Hagan, the chief of the new Land Court, is

[1] "The Life of Cobden."

1881 a man whom I tried to bring forward, and made much of in the beginning of his career. He has the stamp of 1848 upon him as deep as Duffy,[1] and I found him rather literary than politic, more full of good and gracious aspiration than practical and solid. The Court has done two things which must, I imagine, raise doubts at Hawarden. They undertake to fix a rent such as will fairly enable a man to live—that is a rule which would reduce rent per acre in proportion to the smallness of the holding, and would extinguish it altogether in the smallest. And they judge not by the land and buildings, but by the capacity of the tenant—that will lead them to do more for the worse farmer and less for the better. On the other hand, it is terrible to read that farmers cultivating 20 or 30 acres never eat butcher's meat. In France I find that the families of day labourers have meat for dinner every day. I am told that there is scarcely an exception.

Hawarden after Knowsley must have been a relief, especially with Lightfoot, Goldwin Smith, and may I say Harcourt? There is no room—there never is—for what I have to say.

Cannes Nov. 25

I have been away from Cannes for a few days, and am ashamed to be again behindhand.

If I had not known it before, I should discover now what a good fellow Alfred Lyttelton is. F. C.'s view does not convince me. The impeding facts will be there, but the strong will[2] and the untimely gift of self-disparagement may be too much for the facts.

I am struck by what you say of the omission in Morley's book, which I am to receive in a few days. A person who has had a large and legitimate share in

[1] The late Sir Charles Gavan Duffy.

[2] Mr. Gladstone's.

its preparation spoke to me some time ago in a manner which led me to expect that the Treaty narrative would be hostile to Mr. Gladstone, and would reveal soreness against him on the part of Cobden. I discussed the thing with him a good deal, but without materials which would justify me in hoping that I had made an impression. Since then, Mr. Gladstone has become P.M. and Morley is editor of one of the principal organs of a part of the ministry. That explains some degree of reticence, if my former impression was correct. I do not think such reticence quite worthy of the occasion and the men; and it would be well that the true story should be told, unless it should be likely in any way to embarrass the new negotiation. That is a question that can only be settled at Hawarden. 1881

Knowles proposed that I should review the book, having a Tory review already undertaken. He offered to bring the volumes to Cannes before the end of this month. That would not give me the needful time. It would be necessary, in the dearth of books here, and of all sources of information besides T. B. Potter, to have some things looked up in England, by slow process of post. And it would be quite essential to ascertain how much of what is omitted may be supplied. Not feeling sure of that, and of the time, I was obliged to decline. If Knowles comes here, as he portended, I shall have an opportunity of talking it over with him.

Many, many thanks for the glimpse into that precious Diary.[1] You will have observed how he

[1] (Hawarden, 15*th Nov.* 1881).—"*Tête-à-tête* breakfast. A long most interesting talk on the great vexed question of his retirement; started by his saying that he and Lord Granville had discussed it, Lord G. good-humouredly declaring it out of the question. I quoted to him Lord Acton's words, how it would be a serious flaw in his political career to damage and perhaps ruin the Liberal party, by retiring from the leadership while in full possession of health and strength. He said the same arguments had been

1881 demolishes his own argument. He compares what I say now with what people said of Palmerston. Those people were wrong because Palmerston left a better man than himself behind him. But Mr. Gladstone goes on to say that there is nobody behind him fit to lead, except ——. Just work out the sum in Proportion: as G. to P., so is X. to G.

And it is not only a question of men, but of elements. There are many things in the glimpse that are

used in Lord Palmerston's case—that it was said the power and cohesion of the party depended on one man's life; that history had proved in that case that this was not so; that in his own case he had retired in '74 for good; that his reassumption of office was accidental, conditional, and temporary; that it was undertaken for certain purposes foreshadowed in his Midlothian Speeches; that these purposes were all or nearly all accomplished; that if he did not retire after Ireland was settled, and House of Commons procedure readjusted, there was no moment in the future when it would be possible —that Lord Hartington[1] was a man of unusual strength and ability, but that before becoming Prime Minister he required more training as House of Commons leader. (I objected that he might at any moment go to the House of Lords, which would immensely weaken his influence; and besides, who could then lead the House of Commons?) The future leader of H. of C. was a great puzzle and difficulty. Sir Charles Dilke would probably be the man best fitted for it, he had shown much capacity for learning and unlearning, but he would require Cabinet training first; that as time brings nearer Lord Hartington's move into House of Lords, force was added to the argument in favour of his own retirement. That he did not foresee great difficulties ahead for the Liberal party; that the Conservative ditto had thrown away what should have been their strength—the return to the principles and policy of Sir R. Peel; that they were demoralised and degraded; that they had inherited the vices of Lord Beaconsfield without his tact and judgment; (Lord B.'s climax was reached in his attack on Sir Robert Peel. What a magnificent virulence he had shown; what a power of cutting and piercing the man through a searching knowledge of his character); that this jingoism was perpetuated in them, and must eventually be their ruin. That of Forster, Harcourt, and Childers it was hard indeed to say which was best qualified for leading; that Forster would probably be the best, but that he had shown occasional incapacity; that Goschen had sadly injured himself by following up his errors as to franchise with an elaborate eulogium of weak-kneed Liberalism—(I quoted Lord A. again 'that he might resign place, but could not resign power'). He demurred to this: for two years—1874 to 1876—he insisted he had had no influence on the Lib. party, that he should attend the H. of C. very rarely, and possibly begin by going abroad before the Session."

[1] Now Duke of Devonshire.

very notable. I fancy that Goschen's late speech has done him good; but it still seems clear that he will not shut the door on the Tories. I am in communication with them[1] again, and should perhaps see them on my way back, if I could come to Hawarden. 1881

I write this off in haste, before I have an opportunity of showing Mrs. Gladstone's most kind letter to Lady Acton. I don't like to answer her until I have done so.

Of course I should like to come beyond anything. If Parliament does not meet before the proper time, it might be possible to come early in January. The middle of December would not be quite so easy, for reasons here. But please tell me if it would be very much better for reasons paramount. Two thousand miles would be nothing for a good hour's talk with him, and several hours with his Secretary. I hope the Temple of Peace would not lose that character by my invasion of its pacific precincts.

Seeley would be hard on Lecky if he applied those words to his "Eighteenth Century," which is a weighty, thoughtful book. But the two former works, by which he became famous, do not really rise much above the vulgar level. There is nothing in his writings nearly equal to the new Bampton Lectures.[2]

. . . . . .

Hartington's speech has not arrived yet; but the French papers describe him as differing about Ireland from the P.M. and not repelling the idea of Compensation. As this was not urged at the time, it would now be a reproach to the Act, which might never have *Cannes Nov. 29*

[1] The Goschens.

[2] The late Dr. Hatch's Lectures on the "Organisation of the Early Christian Churches."

1881 passed with such conditions. And one neither sees how compensation is to be regulated, nor by whom; whether by a commission stultifying the present one, or by the same contradicting itself. And it is very unlike the economic policy of the P.M. But I can conceive a very powerful argument on the other side, which the Tories are not likely to use.

. . . . . .

Cannes Dec. 2 I have not fired all my shot, and I don't rely on Hartington's translation. His last speech does not strike me favourably.

He puts away the compensation argument in a fashion more parliamentary than statesmanlike. In debate, where effects are immediate and momentary, one is glad of anything that tells against opponents, and gets used to phrases instead of reasons.

Macaulay was indiscreet enough to write to his constituents on Windsor Castle paper. It was good material for a laugh, and no more; but Peel and Graham never let him hear the end of it. "From the proud Keep of Windsor you bade the lieges have no fear," and such like seemed equivalent to argument. When one addresses the Nation, with a sort of Manifesto on a difficult, new, and dangerous question, one must go straight to the point. We expect of a real statesman that he will take the case of his adversary not by its weak end, but at its strongest; that he will see whether he cannot even strengthen it before he replies. If he deals with the weak points, like a lawyer, somebody will follow, and will beat him. That is part of the integrity of public men. And I must say that H.'s idea that he meets the case for compensation by asking whether rack-renting landlords are to be paid for their iniquity,

exposes him to a rejoinder so crushing as to damage his position and to strengthen my plea. 1881

There is no constructive power among the Whigs. There is some among the Democrats, because their principles have been thought out, and provide legislation for generations. But the two men capable of working out thoughts into system on other than purely democratic lines are Derby and Goschen. And they are outside, and do not really contribute to the force of the party.

. . . . . .

There was that omission in my former letter—not quite by accident. Many things are better for silence than for speech: others are better for speech than for stationery. I have a large store of these.

—— is so much stronger that I really believe that I shall be able to run over for a short visit, and the temptation is strong upon me to take your kind words literally. May I come—by the morning train from town—on Monday, the second day of 1882? It would be the pleasantest beginning of a New Year that I could possibly imagine, after a melancholy autumn. *Cannes Dec. 14*

To-morrow I am off to Nice with M., after the Blue Rose, and Christmas presents for the others. They tell me that Mr. Cross[1] is here. If so, I hope to have a talk with him about the difficult life he is writing.

I have been looking forward to the books of the Year, which I have not had courage to send for, especially the life of the most fascinating writer[2] of the day, and the letters of Bishop Thirlwall. I am glad to

[1] The husband of George Eliot.
[2] A short Life of Newman, by Mr. Jennings.

1881 think that I need not stop in London to read them, and am extremely interested by what you say of Thirlwall. I never found him very attractive or accessible, personally.

The success of Newnham is a thing to congratulate your sister on. As to Herbert, the papers enable me to follow his wanderings and conversations with old Irishwomen. He must be making himself very useful to Mr. Gladstone; and I rejoice at symptoms in this day's papers which tend to weaken my inclination to compensation.

Of course you will tell me if the proposed date had better be exchanged for another, if there is any incompatible visit just then or for any other reason. I should not start until Thursday, the 29th.

Cannes Dec. 27 The telegram summoning me for Saturday arrived late last night. If the trains keep time, I shall catch the Boulogne tidal from Paris on Friday, and so obey the summons. I presume there is a 9 or 10 A.M. train which will land us at Chester early enough in the afternoon to reach Hawarden about sunset. It looks like an early departure for Downing Street, which will be an affliction. Or perhaps some visitor with whom I ought to clash. But I am quite prepared to find the secret agent of the Vatican at Hawarden, and to look as if I took him for an African lion. . . .

1882 *Athenæum Jan. 7* . . . I met three Ministers last night at dinner, and the impression is that Mr. Gladstone is remarkably well. But the Conservatism of London is something too excessive.

I met at the Russells', Maine, Monck, F. Leveson, and Reay. At the Athenæum, Hayward, H.

Spencer, May; and there are much worse croakers than these. 1882

It will be quite refreshing to spend Monday at Seacox, with a man[1] who is understood to be travelling towards the Ministry, and no longer away from them. It has been impossible to call in Downing Street; and I dare say your mother was rushing about. But I am to meet them, thanks to you as usual, at Lansdowne House this evening.

At the Museum, Poole gave me the papers to read that Mr. Gladstone spoke of.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Cannes Jan. 17

In London I saw everybody I had designed to look for, except John Morley. . . . Sir Henry Maine got me to criticise the proof of a lecture on the King and his Successor, which you will see in the February *Nineteenth Century*. I hope he accepted some of my amendments; but he was obdurate about the most important. He says that Primogeniture has been of very great political service. I admitted this, but objected that there is another side to the question, that Primogeniture embodies the confusion between authority and property which constitutes modern Legitimacy, that Legitimacy has, in this century, acted as an obstacle to free institutions, and that a one-sided judgment thrown off as that sentence is, gives a Tory tinge to the entire paper. He answered: "You seem to use Tory as a term of reproach."

I was much struck by this answer—much struck to find a philosopher, entirely outside party politics, who

[1] Mr. Goschen.

1882 does not think Toryism a reproach, and still more, to find a friend of mine ignorant of my sentiments about it. And I am much tempted to have it out with him, and discover what he really means. Besides which, I spent some hours in Mark Pattison's company; found Reay desponding, but eager to speak; May,[1] very much depressed; H——, pottering feebly, as I thought, over Montlosier,[2] whom he does not understand, in the *Quarterly*, and Junius, whom he does not discover, in the "Encyclopædia"; Monck[3] remarkable as the one happy Irishman.

. . . . . .

I should like to impress one thought on your mind: Much will depend on your success in making the work of the Session sit lightly on the P.M. in getting him to yield to distractions, even to amusements, and no longer to consider change of work an equivalent to rest. A house near town, the play, I had almost said the opera, might be a help. If he would be unprincipled enough to refuse tiresome dinners, however far off, and then to accept pleasant ones, at short notice, it would be worth a great deal. In short, a little demoralisation is the best security I can see for the supreme perfecting of his career.

By-the-bye, you condemn me for my indefinite answers to some very searching questions; and I find you are right. At least I have read a paper on the Revised Version which satisfies me that I ought to have joined more heartily in Mr. Gladstone's censure of it. But I have been reading it to my children, and it had got associated with very sweet moments. Once

[1] Sir Erskine May.

[2] The Comte de Montlosier, a French emigrant, Royalist, historian, antiquary, feudalist, and Liberal Catholic.

[3] Lord Monck, first Governor-General of Federated Canada.

more, I perceive that my letter is full of everything except yourself. . . . 1882

I return the letter of my heroine[1] with many thanks. It reminds me of what she wrote to me. If I could find it I would send it to you. . . . I think there is a piece of truth in Mr. Ottley's remark. Her strongest conviction, the keystone of her philosophy, was the idea that all our actions breed their due reward in this world, and that life is no reign of reason if we put off the compensation to another world. That is a moral far more easily worked in cases of outward, transitive sin than in those which disturb only the direct relations of man with God. These indeed are cases which may partly depend on our belief in God, not only in humanity and human character. Deny God, and whole branches of deeper morality lose their sanction. Here I am preaching against Bradlaugh, after all! *Cannes Jan. 25*

Her genius would no doubt reveal to her consequences which others cannot imagine. But still the inclination of a godless philosophy will be towards palpable effects and those about which there is no mistake. Especially in a doctrine with so little room for grace and forgiveness, where no God ever speaks except by the voice of other men. Defined and brought to book, that is a detestable system. But it is not on the surface—and many men can no more be kept straight by spiritual motives than we can live without policemen.

Still there is a piece of truth in this paganism. Looking at history, not at biography, taking societies, and not individuals, we cannot deal with things seen by God alone; things take other proportions; the scale of

[1] George Eliot.

1882 vice and virtue is not that of private life; we judge of it by its outward action, and hesitate to penetrate the secrets of conscience. The law of visible retribution is false even there. But it is true that the test and measure of good and evil is not that of the spiritual biographer.

I shall punish Sir H. Maine with your very striking remark about Toryism.

. . . . . .

That is a perilous point, about suspiciousness. By all means we should think well until forced to think ill of people. But we must be prepared for that compulsion; and the experience of history teaches that the uncounted majority of those who get a place in its pages are bad. We have to deal chiefly, in life, with people who have no place in history, and escape the temptations that are on the road to it. But most assuredly, now as heretofore, the Men of the Time are, in most cases, unprincipled, and act from motives of interest, of passion, of prejudice cherished and unchecked, of selfish hope or unworthy fear.

Cannes Feb. 20 I spent at Rome a most interesting fortnight, explaining the history of the Church and of the world to M., listening to a great debate on the representation of minorities, and hearing a good deal of the M.P.[1] who neither has nor has not a mission. We wound up with two days at Florence, and I accompanied M. to Genoa, along the finest part of the Riviera, and then went to Bologna, to a dying relation. All which has stood in the way of coming home, of writing, and of knowing what is going on. I am reading up the debates, and your letters light up the task.

[1] Sir George Errington.

. 1882

Bonghi, who has a volume of Roman History ready, spent an afternoon with me in the Forum; but proved unsound about Ireland. Minghetti took us over the palace of the Cæsars, as they call the Palatine. I took M. the round of imperial statues and monuments of the Popes, hanging a tale to each, and I am afraid her impressions of history are gloomy. We made up for it a little at Santa Croce, with Dante and Fossombroni; and in Savonarola's cell at S. Marco, I sat in his chair, and told her of the friar who died for his belief that the way to make men better was to make them free.

I was not happy about Errington. Everybody spoke well of him. But there was too manifest a desire to amplify the significance of his position, and to entangle him in Roman schemes and views.

Schlözer's first visit was to me, as we lived in the same house, and are old friends. They, at least, have something to offer; but the mission seems to me very ambiguous.

I have long wished for that declaration about self-government; but I am persuaded that there has been as much statesmanship in the choice of the time as of the terms. There is so much danger of being deserted on that line, and of one's friends combining to effect a reaction. It will not do to make too much of the speech of 1871. The occasion, last week, gave extraordinary weight to Mr. Gladstone's words; and he would not now say that the movement is superfluous, or that Ireland always got what she wanted. The risk is that he may seem to underrate the gravity of a great constitutional change, in the introduction of a federal element.

1882 Liberty depends on the division of power. Democracy tends to unity of power. To keep asunder the agents, one must divide the sources; that is, one must maintain, or create, separate administrative bodies. In the view of increasing democracy, a restricted federalism is the one possible check upon concentration and centralism.

But I am very anxious about one thing. If Mr. Gladstone thinks that he cannot carry his colleagues, his party, Parliament, or the nation with him, and declines to take the lead in this movement, the throwing out of the idea may become a source of weakness. They will say that he waits for the initiative of others, that he is expecting a wind, that he is ready to be squeezed, if others will do it for him, that he looks on opinion as a thing to be obeyed, not to be guided—and so will proceed to put pressure on him and to make demonstrations not at all in conformity with his spirit and purpose.

. . . . . .

Cannes Feb. 25 Goschen agreed to go with me to Paris, and changed his mind at the last moment. The consequence was that I did not stop at Paris, and some letters which were sent there from Seacox have only just reached me. And so I have left unanswered your birthday letter, and seemed to disregard the reproach as well as the kindness it expresses.

I will not say that, in the former, there is not much that I have had to consider. Still, in giving up one's home, and country, and friends and occupations, there is at least a mixture of good motives with selfish ones, and something sacrificed, if there is also a good deal of calculated pleasure-seeking and ease. If I held an appointment abroad, keeping me permanently away

from my—very modest—estate, you would say that the Government was insane to offer it, but you would hardly think it wrong of me to accept it. And the duty I have allowed to precede all other duties is one that possesses a strong, and unmistakable, claim on me. 1882

Between my children and my Shropshire neighbours my choice is indeed decided. Do not, when I have the happiness of seeing you again, allow these shortcomings and these backslidings of mine to interfere with that better topic—which is yourself, but which gets no chance.

I am seeing a good deal of the Mallets. He is getting over a very bad illness, and seems to like Cannes, in spite of Sir E. Colebrooke and the *Pall Mall.* I have succeeded in making Sir Louis shake his head over the secret Jacobinism of his friend Morley. Yesterday I had the pleasure of dining with your favourite correspondent.

Your view of the speech introducing the new Procedure is far more just than R.'s. It displayed that serene mastery and lightness of touch which are the latest growth or ripest form of his talent, rather than the controlling and compelling power which we know so well. As to the censure,[1] I hold the necessity of keeping the working of the Act from interference; but I cannot admit that the case of the Commissioners is good, at the weakest point. The defence of their general action seems to me triumphant; but I don't think the attack has been met in the particulars; and the common maxim of all constitutional governments, to stand by one's subordinates in their need, is, I think, a very dangerous one.

[1] The vote of censure on the Lords for appointing a Committee to inquire into the operation of the Irish Land Act.

1882 "John Inglesant" has been begun but not finished, for want of time in London. Here is a letter which it can be no indiscretion to show you, on that interesting subject. I did not, in reply, quite confirm the critic's doubts, though I probably could not remove them. I would rather regard it as a philosophical than as a historical work.

And I missed the *Athenæum* Summary. When one comes to classify all that appears, the gaps strike one as much as the bulk. Still, in the narrow domain of my own book—"The Madonna of the Future"[1]—every week brings several new publications that are sure to contribute some light or some difficulty.

. . . . . .

Cannes March 4 We have no particulars yet, and I still hope it was not an Irishman.[2] The villa at Mentone stands in the midst of dark olive woods, scarcely a mile from the frontier, and less than a furlong from the sea. It will require to be well guarded.

I have followed the conflict with the keen attention you may imagine, and rejoice quite as much as anybody in Downing Street at the personal triumph, and at the accession of strength which is due so entirely to his own efforts and belongs exclusively to himself. It is a gain for a better cause than the Ministry. We are just in that intermediate state in which the issue at Northampton[3] is unknown, but seems certain, which will be a relief.

The correspondence with Gardiner has gone on at

[1] His correspondent's name for his "History of Liberty." It was of course taken from the title of Mr. Henry James's delightful novel.

[2] On the 2nd of March a lunatic named Martin fired at the Queen and Princess Beatrice at Windsor Station.

[3] Bradlaugh's re-election.

some length, and the problem is very interesting. He 1882
persists in rejecting the story. I now understand that John Inglesant is willing to be received, but is told by the Jesuit that he is safe if, with that belief and disposition, he remains an Anglican.

I imagine that he might have argued in this way: Roman Catholic divines hold that the 39 Articles may be understood in a favourable sense. Anglicans hold that they are not literally binding on the clergy. Still less on the laity. Therefore his position in the English Church does not involve this layman in any error. It may involve him in certain dangers and difficulties. But these are not greater than the dangers and difficulties which would follow his conversion. For there are many opinions, not only sanctioned but enforced by the authorities of the Church of Rome, which none can adhere to without peril to the soul. The moral risk on one side is greater than the dogmatic risk on the other. He can escape heresy in Anglicanism more easily than he can escape the ungodly ethics of the papacy, the Inquisition, the Casuists, in the Roman Communion. The solicitation, the compulsion, will be more irresistible in the latter. A man who thought it wrong to murder a Protestant King would be left for hell by half the Confessors on the Continent. Montagu, Bramhall will not sap this man's Catholic faith so surely as the Spanish and Italian moralists will corrupt his soul.

There were men, in the XVIIth century, who would have argued in this way. I can even conceive a Jesuit doing it, for they were much divided, and there were men amongst them far more deeply and broadly divided from the prevailing teaching of their own Church, than from the Catholic party in Anglicanism. But I cannot name any Jesuit living

1882 in Charles I.'s time of whom it could be said with any probability. So that I am sure not to shake Gardiner's conviction. He is not well informed in religious history; but as a friend of Brewer he must have read the life of Goodman, which, I think, Brewer edited.

Gardiner is Irving's son-in-law. His position in that Church inclines him to Conservative views, and it would be hard for him to admit that illustrious Catholic divines who did so much for Christian revelation and for spiritual doctrine were in reality so infamous in their moral teaching as my hypothesis implies. But I am letting the cat of the Piazzetta[1] out of the bag.

I do hope that the social duties are not too irksome.

Cannes March 9

I was at Mentone yesterday, and as I do not much like the place where the Queen is to live, I took pains to ascertain what is doing for her safety. The Vice-Consul is a singularly intelligent and practical man, and I saw with satisfaction that the peculiar drawbacks are fully understood. Every precaution will be taken, without attracting attention, or being perceived by the Queen herself.

I shall not get credit for my loyalty, for it caused me to miss a meeting which was held here, during my absence, to vote an address. But I was rewarded by finding Green, the historian, at Mentone, in good spirits—but in bad health—and I spent an interesting hour with him.

Gardiner tells me that I understand nothing about the question, that the Jesuit was only a conspirator and intriguer, and that "John Inglesant" is abominably overrated. So let us wait for Fraser, with open and

[1] This refers to a conversation at Venice in October 1879.

unsettled minds. Brewer published in 1839 "The Court of James I.," being the Memoirs of Goodman, Bp. of Gloucester, possibly not the book in question, but one that would make the situation clear to the intelligent reader. Green, who does not agree, much, with Gardiner, tells me that he has made great sacrifices by adhering to Irvingism, and that he has still to struggle with extreme poverty. Being one of the two or three most solid historians in England, he has to teach at an inferior girls' school. He has had the misfortune to lose several children, as well as his first wife. Do you know his Outline of English History? I make my children read it, to keep out ——. I wonder what the numerous Wickhams will learn history in. I am so glad that I have a new friend of the same kind as those I like so much. 1882

As Mr. Gladstone has had various correspondence with Mivart, it may interest him to know that that very distinguished philosopher, the most eminent man of science our Church has had in England, was constrained to decline election at the Athenæum, being certain of blackballs, by reason of his quarrel with the Darwinians. In the hope that the Committee may elect him, he wishes to be put down in the books again; and he asks me to propose him. As I have never spoken to him in my life, it is against the rule; but I have agreed to do it, in acknowledgment of his unquestioned eminence and because of Mr. Gladstone's weakness for him, which I, otherwise, do not share. The wicked Sclater, vendor of Jumbo, is the Seconder.

Even without knowing the conversation with Gibson, who seems to me a most able specimen of his kind, the attitude taken up towards the Lords seems to me

1882 in all ways excellent. As to Bradlaugh, as he is there, I wish the amendment[1] had succeeded—for I have not read the *Nineteenth Century*.[2] But have you seen in the *Century*—once *Scribner*—Bryce on Disraeli? It is a good paper.

. . . . . .

Cannes March 21 In the middle of John Inglesant came the enclosed,[3] which I return, with dismay. The impression given seems to be that by speaking of dogmatic danger in England, and of moral danger in Rome, I ingeniously laid a silent imputation of heterodoxy on Anglicans, whilst implying that we are free at least from that suspicion; so that I thought of 1882 whilst I spoke of 1640, and meant controversy, though pretending to write history.

The reward of history is that it releases and relieves us from present strife. My only endeavour was to recall what might have occurred two centuries and a half ago, to a sincere and upright priest, that is, to one who studied to detach his mind from its habitual surroundings, to look behind his own scenes, to stand apart with Archimedes, to practise the *doute méthodique* of Descartes, to discern prejudice from faith and sympathy from truth. There was no such problem, and I know now that my zeal was wasted on a personage whose notion of religion was not worth inquiry. But I was not pleading a cause. I scarcely venture to make points against the religion of other people, from a curious experience that they have more to say than I know, and from a sense that it is safer to reserve

[1] That Mr. Bradlaugh, having been re-elected for Northampton, should be allowed to take the oath and his seat.

[2] A protest by Cardinal Manning against the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh.

[3] A letter from Mr. Gladstone to his daughter.

censure for one's own, which one understands more intimately, having a share of responsibility and action. 1882

It would have been more accurate to sacrifice my antithesis by referring to doctrinal trouble as well as moral risk on our side. If I did not do so—I have no recollection of my words—the reason may be that I am too deeply impressed with the moral risk to have the other very present to my mind. Encountering an associate of Guy Fawkes and Ravaillac, I do not stop to ask what he makes of the Apocrypha, or how far he goes with the Athanasian Creed. I believe that our internal conflicts spring from indifference to sin, and not from a religious idea. A speculative Ultramontanism separate from theories of tyranny, mendacity, and murder, keeping honestly clear of the Jesuit with his lies, of the Dominican with his fagots, of the Popes with their massacres, has not yet been brought to light. Döllinger, who thinks of nothing else, has never been able to define it, and I do not know how to distinguish a Vaticanist of that sort, a Vaticanist in a state of grace, from a Catholic.

Let me supply my omission by declaring that my hypothetical divine would not have found all the moral evil in one quarter, and ambiguous doctrine only in the other. I dare say he would think that in England too little was done for the spiritual life, and, unless he had a taste for Donne, that devotional literature was backward; and he might even agree with Thorndike that the neglect of the discipline of penance threatened the Church with ruin. In like manner, he would not view with favour some of the dogmatic theology that flourished amongst his friends. He might, for instance, deem that Molinism or Jansenism, neither of them yet

1882 approved or rejected, but severally dominant in many lands, were false systems, and that, between the two, a Catholic doctrine of grace was hard to find. He would be aware that Rome still cherished the idea that roused Luther, that, by committing a sin one may save a soul; and he would perhaps conclude, with a famous Jesuit of his day, that Luther did well to attack it.

Of the instances suggested, one, the Cultus of the Blessed Virgin, was partly of later growth and would not seriously disturb a contemporary of Charles the First. It does not offend in the older, classical literature of the Church, in the Imitation, the Exposition, the Pensées, or the Petit Carême. Sixty years ago, a priest who is still living was sent as Chaplain to Alton Towers. At Evening Prayers, when he began the Litany of Loretto, Lord Shrewsbury rose from his knees and told him that they never recited it. He was a man, as the "Life of Panizzi" shows, without an idea of his own.

Images would probably impress him as a danger to be warded, rather, I think, than Transubstantiation. Here the difficulty that strikes a dialectician hardly reaches the people. Many Catholics are practically conscious of no difference from the higher Anglican or Lutheran view of the Real Presence. Hegel's argument, that a mouse which had nibbled a Host would become an object of adoration, would strike nine laymen out of ten as a poor joke. I know not whether the confusion of thought was greater then or less; but he would remember so many cases of Protestants ready to conform on no harder condition than the concession of the Cup that his scruples would be likely to melt. Montagu saying that he knew no Roman tenet he

would not subscribe, unless it were Transubstantiation, would have made him wonder why a Catholic-minded prelate should be more stiffnecked than the unbending Lutherans or fiercer Bohemians. 1882

But whatever the dogmatic perils he might apprehend, he would meet them in the same spirit of charitable construction he had employed on the other side. I will presume that he took the oath of allegiance, for, in 1635, the Jesuits allowed their penitents to take it. He would even admit the Royal Supremacy, like Father Caron, as not exceeding the prerogative of Kings in France and Spain. He would drop the imputation of schism, seeing that Bramhall wrote that there was no formed difference with the Church of Rome about any point of faith. Finding that an Archbishop denied any necessary articles of faith beyond the Apostles' Creed, he would regard the 39 Articles as Hall, Chillingworth, Bramhall, Stillingfleet, and, according to Bull, all that are well advised, considered them—pious opinions which no man was obliged to believe. With Bossuet, he would acknowledge the force of the case in favour of Anglican orders, and with Richard Simon he would admit that the Caroline divines had not their equals in his own Church, and would revere them as the strongest enemies of the specific heresies of Luther and Calvin, as the force that would sap the fabric against which Rome still contended in vain. If he heard that there was a bishop who begged prayers for his soul, another who tolerated the Invocation of Saints, a third who allowed Seven Sacraments, and so on, he might be willing to believe, with Davenport, that the chasm was filled that had separated England from Trent.

To reach that point of conciliation it would be

1882 necessary to make the best of everything, so far as could be without sophistry, violence, or concealment. And the same rule of favourable interpretation would be applied by the same man to his own Theology. He would be bound by the limits of Richelieu's proposals, and would keep within the lines of Bossuet, and those which Spinola afterwards drew, with the assent of Pope and General.

He would have been confirmed in this method by the response it drew from such eminent Protestants as Grotius, Bramhall, La Bastide, Prætorius, Fabricius, and Leibniz. Their judgment would have encouraged him to abide in his own communion, and would have taught him that he was as safe as his friend on the other side. The same impartiality would have led to the same result. There were even Protestant divines who sanctioned conversions to Rome.

The last time I saw Count Arnim he asked about Newman's Vatican defence. I said that he had explained the decrees away by declaring that he meant no defence of persecution and tyrannicide. That was a canon of interpretation strong enough to blow any other ingredient into gas. Arnim objected that Newman's manipulations were not accepted at Rome. Just then he became a Cardinal, and so they were indirectly sanctioned.

I endow my seventeenth-century divine with the ingenuity and the integrity of Newman. Having given England the benefit of No. 90, he would gild Rome with the answer to the Expostulation. Shutting one eye to the Articles, like Chillingworth, he would, like Spinola, shut the other to the Council of Trent. Having expounded Anglo-Catholicism by the light of Bramhall, he would, in the same spirit, choose

Cassander, Bossuet, Corker as genuine exponents of Roman Catholicism, and he could do both without insincerity or surrender. 1882

Don't let me make too much of that passage in Newman. He defended the Syllabus, and the Syllabus justified all those atrocities. Pius the Fifth held that it was sound Catholic doctrine that any man may stab a heretic condemned by Rome, and that every man is a heretic who attacks the papal prerogatives. Borromeo wrote a letter for the purpose of causing a few Protestants to be murdered. Newman is an avowed admirer of Saint Pius and Saint Charles, and of the pontiffs who canonised them. This, and the like of this, is the reason of my deep aversion for him.

There is not time for Shorthouse to-day. I will tell you about him as soon as I can.

Cannes March 20–22

Wickham lent me John Inglesant yesterday, and I finished it before bedtime. I have read nothing more thoughtful and suggestive since Middlemarch, and I could fill with honest praise the pages I am going to blacken with complaint. But if I had access to the author, with privilege of free and indiscreet speech, it would seem a worthier tribute to his temper and ability to lay my litany of doubts before him. Not having it, I submit my questionings to yourself, as the warmest admirer of his work. Probably the difficulties which occur to me have been raised already in reviews which you have read. For instance :—

I. 29. Inglesant's name does not appear in the trials of the Protestants. Did the Marian persecution rage in Wilts ?

73, 74. Here is a Puritan party in Parliament and a

1882 scheme to pervert its leaders, in August 1637. No Parliament had sat for eight years.

83. Juan Valdes was not a papist but a Protestant.

90. Would Foxe be the favourite and characteristic author of such Arminians as the Ferrars?

101. The Mass is the strongest of all the motives that lead men to Rome.—I really doubt it, for I remember more instances of men attracted by our orders, by authority, unity, confession.

107. Hobbes thinks it is the consecrating power by which a priest, in the hour of death, can save a soul.—He should have said, the power of absolution.

207. Something similar to the feeling in England during the Sepoy rebellion. Read: Mutiny. This is an understatement. The Irish massacre was more appalling to the imagination because it was nearer and of vaster reported proportions. A respectable writer who lived in Ireland believes that there were 300,000 victims.

272. Charles contrasted most favourably with his judges, whose sole motive was self. Ludlow's Memoirs, and other sources, show that something was at work besides selfish fears. The men perhaps were no better for that. They may even have been worse, inasmuch as the higher and better part of them served as the motive of crime. Carnot may have been as infamous as Barère; but it is unjust to tar them with the same brush.

277. Eustace loses his suppers with the French King—Louis was eleven years old.

279, 312. I don't remember the term Quakers in current use as early as January 1650, but very soon after.

327. In opposition to this, the Jesuits about the

time of the Reformation came forward with what was called a new doctrine.—The book in question came out in 1588. 1882

Vol. I. 339. II. 12. Legate and nuncio are treated as the same thing. They are as different as Prætor and Dictator.

II. 3. The learning of the Fathers was not what it had been a century ago.—These Fathers must be Italian monks generally, or else the Jesuits. It is not true of either. The Jesuits had no very eminent scholars in the first generation. Salmeron, the most noted, lived to be told by Bellarmin that his books would take a good deal of retouching before going to press. The middle of the seventeenth century, especially the second quarter, was the golden age of Jesuit learning, when their supremacy was uncontested. The Benedictines did not begin to rival them quite so early as Cressy says, I. 334.

4. Chigi is never di Chigi, and the pope's sister-in-law was called Olimpia Maidalchini.

106. An age or two ago the priestly government was better. Yet Machiavelli brings much the same accusation against it in his time.

138. Some confusion as to the name of the English College.

272. The steps of the Trinità were hardly built then. There might be more of these little scruples, and, by themselves, they do not build up a strong misgiving. The picture may be true in spite of slips in accessary detail. But is the picture true, I will not say controversially, but historically? There are glaring faults in it, not open to dispute or controversy, and I will begin with these.

Inglesant comes to Rome about 1654, where Molinos

1882 has already resided some years; and he then attends to the business of the Duke of Umbria. Umbria is Urbino. The last Duke of Urbino died nearly forty years before Molinos settled in Rome. Inglesant is present at the condemnation of Molinos, and afterwards visits Worcester, in Charles the Second's reign—II. 369. Charles the Second had been dead two years when Molinos was condemned.

In the pontificate of Alexander the Seventh, we hear all at once that Molinos is arrested, and are told of a meeting, at the Chigi palace, of persons belonging to the time of Innocent the Eleventh. II. 333. Without a single word, we are carried over three pontificates and an interval of thirty years.

The Jesuit who is so hopeful of Anglican re-union that he will not allow his favourite pupil to join the Church of Rome is called Sancta Clara. There was a Father Sancta Clara in those days, who is peculiarly well remembered among English Catholics as the greatest writer we had between Stapleton and Newman, less acute than the one, less eloquent than the other, more learned than either; remarkable for opinions so conciliatory as to resemble those of his imaginary namesake, and to make him the originator and suggester of No. XC.; remarkable also for the extreme difficulty of getting his books. But he was a Franciscan, not a Jesuit, a scholar, not an intriguer; and his name was not Hall, but Davenport.

This is surely a wilful and wanton confusion of persons, times, and things. It destroys confidence in the writer's carefulness or knowledge, gives a tone of unreality, and makes one feel that the whole is out of keeping.

The book depicts the religious strivings of the age

so far as the hero would come in contact with them, keeping a sort of syncretism[1] in view. Some of the most remarkable currents of thought are left out of sight, and others, which were not within reach, are introduced by a tyrannical use of time and space. The Rosicrucians can hardly have been talked about in England within twenty years after the Fama appeared. The Quietists had not appeared in Rome under Innocent the Tenth. The wonderful teaching of Böhme, which did reach us under Charles the First, is not alluded to ; and Inglesant lives in the same house with Van Helmont, and never discovers that he is more than a physician. The most intense religious force of all that which prevailed during Inglesant's English career, Independency, is nowhere named, as well as I remember. The writer does not differentiate Puritans. He lumps Arminian with Predestinarian, the man who looks on Schism with the horror felt by Baxter and the man who made Schism a principle of organisation. Monarchy, he tells us, was restored because the Puritans hated the tyranny of Cromwell. It was restored, because Presbyterians would not stand being oppressed by Congregationalists ; and for another reason which was discovered by Harrington,[2] and may still be discovered in his Works. We are introduced to Hobbes and to More—Hobbes much better drawn than More—but we never meet Chillingworth, and though at one time very near to Hammond we do not hear him. Ussher offering terms to Presbyterians, Baxter seeking for peace with Prelacy, Bramhall holding out a hand to Gallicans, Leighton consorting with Jansenists—all this good and

1882

[1] Union, fusion.

[2] James Harrington, 1611–1677. Toland edited his work on the "Theory of the State," which was seized by Cromwell.

1882 apt material is disdained. Instead of the original thinkers among the English Catholics—Barnes, Holden, Davenport, White, Caron, Serjeant, Walshe—we have only Cressy, by way of a foil to the Jesuits, and with a vague reminiscence of a page in the writings of an Edgbaston neighbour. Of the efforts making in France and Holland to mitigate Calvinism, and in Germany to tone down the dogma of Augsburg, not a word. Lutherans only appear in order to be saddled with a doctrine by which they would be sorry to stand or fall. Jansenism, odious, probably, to the author, is not displayed; and the definition of the Oratorian spirit as contrasted with Benedictine and Jesuit, is quite inadequate.

Mysticism and High Church Anglicanism are so highly favoured that the hero, when the Jesuit relaxes his grasp, acquiesces in both. At Rome he is a hearty Molinosist. Driven from Rome he is a hearty Anglican. Perhaps Malebranche or Fénelon might have facilitated the transition from Petrucci to Norris and Nelson and Ken. But there is no transition. The passage is made by the help of no subtler agency than a Newhaven smack. The thing is unexplained, inartistic, inorganic, but quite consistent with the drifting nature of Inglesant. Coming to more debatable ground I proceed with greater diffidence: Who sat for the profane and sceptical Cardinal? There is some likeness to Retz, without his genius or any premonition of the change which, in Inglesant's time, came over him. But it would be an unpardonable error to paint an Italian prelate with colours owned by a Frenchman. I suspect the author of having no authority for this description, both because his account of the Conclave is so superficial, and for the following reason. Rinuccini,

alluding to persecution, goes back a century for an example, to a foreign country and a hostile church. One later instance occurs to his company, but he rejects it. Evidently, he thinks that there is nothing of the sort nearer at hand. If, he says, they once commenced to burn at Rome, they would not know where to stop. 1882

An account of Catholicism which assumes that, in the middle of the seventeenth century, Rome had not commenced to burn, is an account which studiously avoids the real and tragic issues of the time. The part of Hamlet is omitted, by desire. For when Rinuccini spoke, the fires of the Roman Inquisition were, indeed, extinct, but had been extinguished in his lifetime, under the preceding pontificate, having burnt for nearly a century. Familiar instances must have been remembered by his hearers; and they had read in the most famous theological treatise of the last generation, by what gradation of torments a Protestant ought to die. They knew that whoever obstructed the execution of that law forfeited his life, that the murder of a heretic was not only permitted but rewarded, that it was a virtuous deed to slaughter Protestant men and women, until they were all exterminated.

To keep these abominations out of sight is the same offence as to describe the Revolution without the guillotine. The reader knows no more than old Caspar what it was all about.

There was no mystery about these practices, no scruple, and no concealment. Although never repudiated, and although retrospectively sanctioned by the Syllabus, they fell into desuetude, under pressure from France, and from Protestant Europe. But they were defended, more or less boldly, down to the peace of

1882 Westphalia.[1] The most famous Jesuits countenanced them, and were bound to countenance them, for the papacy had, by a series of books approved and of acts done, identified itself with the system, and the Jesuits were identified with the cause of the papacy. A Gallican was not quite so deeply compromised. He might say that these are the crimes and teaching of the Court, not of the Church, of Rome; and he was on his guard to restrict the influence and to disparage the example of the popes. Nevertheless, to say: If you believe the books which Rome commends; if you accept the doctrines which Rome imposes under pain of death and damnation; if you do the deeds she requires, and imitate the lives she proposes as your patterns, you will be probably hanged in this world, and assuredly damned in the next—this would have sounded like derision even in the mouth of Pascal or Bossuet. To a Jesuit it was impossible. He existed in order to sustain the credit of the Popes. He wished the world to think well of them. They were a tower of strength, an object of pride to every member of the Society. He was obliged to swallow them whole. Therefore, though he might wear the mask of Lancelot Andrews or William Wilberforce, within it was a lining of Saint Just. It is this combination of an eager sense of duty, zeal for sacrifice, and love of virtue, with the deadly taint of a conscience perverted by authority, that makes them so odious to touch and so curious to study.

You will be prepared to hear that I no more recognise the Jesuit than the Cardinal. Something indeed may be urged in behalf of the sonorous wickedness of those instructions in which he betrays his spirit, in the strongest passage of the book. It matters not what

[1] 1648.

cause we take up, provided we defend it well—that is Probabilism. It matters not what wrong we do in a good cause—that again is the maxim that the end justifies the means, which, like Probabilism, was just then in the ascendant. It matters not whether the cause for which we sin is religion or policy—even that is paralleled by the way in which the French Jesuits, all but one, supported Richelieu in his alliance with the Protestants, in the Thirty Years' War. But it is the character of an exceptional Jesuit, not a type. It is not indicated that he goes wrong from the worthiest motive; that the disinterested spirit of religion, which to other men is a safeguard, is as fatal to him as vulgar passions to other men. The true Jesuit falls better than that. His decay begins at the top. He does not find his way to Malebolge[1] until a guide misleads him whom he takes for an angel of light. The sordid, lying, selfish, ambitious specimen does not appear unless grafted on a fanatical stock. The essence that vitiates so much discipline and virtue is so subtle that we seldom feel the resemblance when Jesuits are portrayed from outside. 1882

The author seems hardly to detect his own rogue. When Hall coolly announces that a lie must be told which will cause a man's death, and is therefore equivalent to murder, it is not clear whether this is infamous or not. For Charles betrays Glamorgan as his son afterwards betrayed Montrose, and we are still expected to revere him as something better than the enemies who, to save their necks, resorted to Pride and Bradshaw. So again, speaking of Laud and Strafford, he implies that if they were unsuccessful tyrants, they were no tyrants at all. That is, to be a tyrant, you must

[1] Situated in the depth of the Inferno.—Canto xviii. line 1.

1882 succeed, just as, to be a rebel, you must fail. The model of tyrants is Cæsar Borgia. When he was down, Machiavelli, who had thought him worth attentive study, said to him that he wondered so good a player should have lost the game. He answered that he had foreseen every combination except that of himself being prostrate with illness when the crash came. That miscalculation would become his excuse.

If this propensity to absolve royal and loyal culprits comes from sympathy with them, it seems to me no better than the crooked canon of Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude. The standard, in another place, is a low one: The priest who invites Inglesant not to die with a lie in his mouth reminds him that they subordinated their religion to their political intrigues. But what if they subordinated politics to their religious interest? To waver about ship money until one knows whether Charles or Hampden is on the side of one's Church is dishonesty. To have no moral test of duty apart from religion is to be a fanatic. What Inglesant imputes to the Catholics is very near the definition of an honest man. For reasons less obvious I am not satisfied with the character of Inglesant. We learn in the first volume, p. 34, that he never formally joined the Church of Rome; and in the second, p. 318, that he must have been formally received into it. There is a more serious contradiction still. His life is singularly blameless and heroic, but one does not perceive the safeguard. Three channels by which God speaks to the soul are excluded. Inglesant will do anything but read the Bible. He has never studied to distinguish the voice of the Church, the constancy of her teaching, the line of least resistance, the law that regulates her movements. Conscience is a word that does not occur during the first 200 pages of

religious training. Then she asks him, what if they ask him to do something that his conscience cannot approve? He very truly answers that it is too late to think of that. Then the word returns two or three times, but the idea is gone. We repeatedly find that he knows not right from wrong, and is not scared by sin. When reminded of the horrors of the Inquisition he calmly observes: Not one of these practices but has some shadow of truth in it. A priest, defending imaginary relics, says: These things are true to each of us according as we see them. Inglesant is content, and does not ask who invents or promotes the fable. Having, with some pains, forced his master to confess the iniquity of his scheme, he adopts it with alacrity. There is not a momentary struggle between self-devotion and the shock of indignation. The spring is broken. The sense is dulled. The voice within is hushed. What then kept this man's life so pure in court and camp? The book is not written to suggest that honour and chivalry are a genuine form or a substitute for grace. 1882

One might suspect that it is the idea which Plato transmitted from Socrates, which Cameron, in 1624, had revived—that the knowledge of good and evil is virtue. But Inglesant possesses the virtue without the knowledge. He is as destitute of conviction as he is free from vice. His one security is Direction. He passes from hand to hand, and successive teachers impress him for a time, but impart no principle. When they fail him, he stands where they found him, a safe and contented Churchman, not because he has examined all things and chosen the best, but because the master he preferred happened to be in prison.

A fine opportunity had been wasted. A clever, refined, high-spirited youth, who has won, in a religious

1882 philosophy, a standing ground apart from Churches, who yet learns to sympathise with them, and who sheds his prejudices and illusions as he grows in spiritual experience; that would be a noble study in the days of Grotius, Descartes, Lord Herbert, Hammond, Baxter, Roger Williams, Blondel, Raynaud, and Pascal. None of these appear on the platform with Hobbes and Cressy and Molinos—as though, two centuries later, a man should seek rest for conscience without going near Channing, Arnold, Newman, Vinet, Neander, Rothe, Schelling, or Grundtvig. Last, the terms Romish, papist, popery, in so good an artist, make me ask myself whether a papist who respects himself would talk of heretics, schismatics, apostates, and infidels? But I have become confused from my prolixity.

I shall be very glad if there is anything in what I said that Arthur Lyttelton can turn to account, after careful verification. If he will take the trouble to examine for himself, there can be no reason to allude to anybody else.

He will abstain, I know, from raising those points respecting persecution which would give just offence, appearing in this indirect way. To mark the enormity of supposing that the Cardinal did not know that people used to be burned in Rome; it would be enough to say that he cannot have forgotten the reign of Paul V. Down to that reign, from 1542 to 1608, the thing was common and notorious. After Paul V. there is little that anybody would remember who has not made a study of such things. This also must be borne in mind, that in Rome, unlike Spain, the victims were usually strangled, and were not committed to the flames until they were dead.

The book alluded to, I. 327, is Molina, on grace.

The defence about the appearance of the name of Quakers would be that it appeared in that very year 1650. But they are here talked about as early as January, as if quite well known. The answer to my objection about Sancta Clara would be that the similarity of opinions suggested the use of the name. But the man is too well known to be treated in that unceremonious way. 1882

To say, I. 137, that among Puritans self-restraint and concealment were sins, is so serious an imputation, especially the first word, that it should be defined which sect was meant. Nobody says that Baxter was rude, not even Howe, in private life. There is a slovenliness in this use of a big brush. Cardinal Howard does not deserve the praise he gets, II. 333. He was a very pale figure.

Observe II. 273. There are no spires in Rome. I hear that the author has never been in Italy. That accounts for many topographical mistakes, and leaves a margin to his credit.

The date of the steps of the Trinita might perhaps be discovered in the life of Cardinal Polignac, or in the article on him in Michaud or Didot. It matters not; but the correctness of local and chronological colour turns on such points as these. I think Cressy could hardly have justified what he says of the Fathers.

On looking over my lengthy prose I find something that I must add:—Valdes never renounced Catholicism, but his writings, only lately made accessible, are the writings of a Protestant. The numbers mentioned in the Irish massacre are, of course, monstrously exaggerated, as were the numbers given by Clarendon, Milton, and Baxter. I quote them to show the greatness of the

1882 alarm. The French Jesuits stood by Richelieu and allowed one of their number to be exiled for his opposition to the German war when, after the peace of Prague, it had ceased to be a war in defence of the Protestants, and was purely aggressive. This was because, in 1627, he had made them understand that they must leave France if they resisted his will. It was easier to associate resistance to Puritanism with the Catholic cause than aggression on the Catholic Powers in Germany. I do not say that the care taken to prevent conversion is absolutely impossible. Some Franciscans at that time might have done it; and something like it is told of a Jesuit a few years later.

There is a very curious passage, II. 385, on persecution: It was these selfsame ideas of the future and its relation to this life that actuated their tormentors. This is an attempt to look beneath the surface, and a soothing tribute to the feelings of those who admire Galerius and Calvin and Gregory the Thirteenth. The Natural History of Intolerance has not yet been written; but the analysis is not so simple as these words imply. Half of the persecution in the Roman Empire, all the persecution of Huguenots by the Valois, and of Roman Catholics under Elizabeth, was due to other ideas than those of the future. And where religious ideas induced men to side with the tormentors against Toleration, there is much that is not more sincere or more excusable than the ideas that have led to political massacres. The opinion expressed covers some of the ground, but only a very small part of it.

But I must stop somewhere.

Cannes March 29 If there are judges and juries in Britain, Macmillan would expose himself to fine and imprisonment by

printing what I write to you. You will see in a moment, I am sure, why it could never be. 1882

It would be an offence to the author, because there is no allowance of the large measure of praise and even of admiration due to him—nothing but the Catalogue of objections suggested to me by the belief that I was writing to a too fervent admirer of the book. Without my signature it would be a stab in the dark; and with my name it would be insufferably pretentious, uncalled-for, and unfair. And I, who make a profession of knowing about Conclaves and the like, should be bound to visit more amply, if not more severely, the strangely inadequate and pointless narrative of the election of Chigi. Few things are more curious and dramatic than the Conclaves, and this one is particularly well known.

Besides, Fraser is sure to be very hostile, both in detail and in respect of the scope and spirit of the work. He is sure to quarrel with Jesuit and Cardinal, and to say much of what I have said in strict confidence. Please, dismiss the thought; and if you compliment anything, let it be the paper and handwriting.

That is a very kind question about Gardiner; and as I have at hand, here, the means of learning more without risk of indiscretion, I had better postpone my answer. If, as a rule, those pensions are granted to people almost destitute of means, the case could not well be admitted. He ought to be at the Record Office instead of the present Hardy. It is in Jessel's gift, and he asked my advice, specially excluding clergymen, and thereby losing the two best men, Brewer and Stubbs. I suggested Freeman, Gardiner, and Bond. Freeman sent me word that he would not take it. Jessel told me he would appoint Bond—who is now the very good

1882 and estimable, but gloomy successor of Panizzi—but that he had been told that Bond was a Catholic. He said that a Jew was not strong enough to appoint a Catholic Keeper of the Archives. Bond is a Broad Churchman, and the report arose only from my recommendation. Gardiner therefore remained; but it was resolved, under I know not what pressure, to keep the thing in the Hardy family. Meantime, I think Gardiner succeeded Brewer in his professorship at King's College—not, I imagine, remunerative, but still an obstacle.

Yes, I agree about Forbes, and rather think he is one of the men Simon speaks of, and defies the Sorbonne to meet—unless I am mixing up the two divines of that name.

Spinola wrote no book. He was a Franciscan bishop, Imperial Confessor at Vienna, and produced several schemes of union, on the part of Rome, which differ from other such by being definite and sincere. Leibniz, and the Calixtine school of Lutherans, were very near adopting his plan; but as he was an agent of pope and emperor when Louis XIV. was the enemy of both, Bossuet contrived to baffle him. What was known of these transactions down to our day is in Pichler's work on Leibniz. Much more has since come out in the "Correspondence of the Electress Sophia," and there is more to come, whenever the Madonna of the Future[1] is unveiled.

Of John Inglesant, let me say that it would be a very fair text to work on—how far the pagan, human virtues, coupled with qualities which are not, in a spiritual sense, virtues, such as courage, delicacy, good nature, veracity, pride, can accomplish the outward, visible

[1] "The History of Liberty."

work of grace. But that is clearly not the author's design. 1882

If Gardiner's paper is very hostile, and you then think it worth while to send my remarks to Mr. Shorthouse,[1] through his publisher or otherwise, that is a case governed by the saying of the younger Pompey.[2]

I liked what I saw of the Fox Memorials during a very short inspection; and yesterday, lunching at the parsonage at Mentone, I found the Life of Lowder. The accounts of Prince Leopold were distressing. Fancy my finding myself with two excellent clergymen, both ardent Gladstonians, and both wishing for the admission of Bradlaugh. Otherwise my journey was not altogether successful, as I got half a sunstroke, which you have already seen traces of in my letter.

. . . . . .

Cannes April 27

The description you quote of Coleridge is not more inaccurate than epigram requires. I have just drawn up a list of recommended authors for my son, as being the company I should like him to keep, after me; and after some hesitation I included S. T. C. in the number. But he has to be balanced by sounder stuff.

Lecky only arrived two days ago, and is scarcely begun. But the beginning, and the account of Junius struck me as very far indeed ahead of all his former writings. There is a good deal of slovenly writing, and it is puerile to write modern history from printed books; but this is a wonderfully solid performance. You will not think it as amusing as Froude's "Carlyle," when you come to it, but much more nutritious.

[1] The letter in question was sent to Mr. Shorthouse, and was answered in detail by him.

[2] "Ah, this thou should'st have done and not have spoken on't.
In me 'tis villainy: in thee it had been good service."

1882 You depressed my spirits the other day by showing that the majority of 39 did not amount to quite so much as I, from a distance, had imagined. And the Budget, though open to very little remark, does not do much to raise them. If I was not conscious of being the worst accountant yet discovered, I should say that there is a slip in one of the calculations of Savings Bank deposits.

Gardiner for some reason did not publish his article. . . . If Arthur Lyttelton, out of pure cussedness, wishes to put in the note you speak of, I would like to see what it is he says, starting from the materials buried in my letter.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Cannes May 3 Lecky's merits stand undiminished by further acquaintance, but the deficiencies become more glaring. The character of Burke, though in my opinion very defective, seems to me the best I have read in the language.

. . . . . .

The May *Fraser* contains his article,[1] and I greatly fear that his judgment will be as critical as my own.

I wonder whether you have the *Temps* or *Débats* in Downing Street, and have read the speeches of Pasteur and Renan. I do not remember so interesting a reception, and what is serious is that the most powerful intellectual force in France has declared, virtually, for materialism.

Cannes May 5 We have nothing later than Tuesday's speech, so that the lines are not traceable into the future, and I am still in a very anxious and doubting stage.

[1] Mr. S. R. Gardiner's review of "John Inglesant."

It is not apparent why Spencer occupies a position between earth and heaven. He looks like a warming pan. Not for a prince, for that is out of the question. For Dufferin?[1] But Dufferin, who is easy, dexterous, and popular, has not the sterling and transparent quality of Spencer himself. It may well be the basis of a vast change in the machinery for the government of Ireland; but that would require legislation for which there is no time. Perplexity No. 1. 1882

Then one must conclude that the change comes from assurances given by the moderate Irish members, that it would enable them to moderate the raging ones. But to ensure that, they must have a finger in the pie, and Russell or Shaw would have to have the offer of the Irish Office. It seems clear, from the delay, that that is not to be; and one hears of Lefevre and Chamberlain. . . . Perplexity 2.

There is a look of uncertainty and want of clearness about the whole thing. Cowper resigns; after an interval, half a successor is appointed; then the suspects are released; then Forster resigns; and then, after another interval showing want of preparation, there is a new Secretary. This way of doing whatever is to be done suggests that the Ministry had not the foresight to anticipate opinion, or strength to lead it. Dropping one colleague after another in their Irish course makes that course appear wanting in deliberation and design, and strengthens the notion that, under heavy pressure, they may be driven nobody knows where, like men who yield, not like men who lead. I presume that there is some evidence of ensured improvement, consequent upon concession. But one doubts that again, when

[1] The late Marquis of Dufferin.

1882 Forster resigns; and it seems that the change is in the ideas more than in the facts. As to any gain on Irish opinion from the grace of concession, I should not expect it, as so many suspects remain in custody. If so, then the advantage would be derived from the new position of the Irish leaders—a very doubtful policy. Then again, I don't like the moment; immediately after Cairns's stroke, and the untimely publication of his draft report.[1] I don't like anything which looks like overtrumping, because it is not fit for such a Prime Minister to follow initiative, whether that of opponents, or of English or Irish opinion.

These misgivings occur to me although you know, if nobody else does, that I was not convinced by the argument in favour of coercion, and saw no evidence of greater demoralisation than was the direct effect of actual suffering. Since then there has been so much atrocity in Ireland, so much foreign influence, and so manifest a change for the worse in the conduct of the clergy, that I have grown reconciled to the strong hand. Even if full of sympathy with the spirit of the present policy, I cannot satisfy myself with the mode of its inception, and I shall not feel comfortable for some days, until the design grows clear. To you, they will be intensely interesting, and I shall be very glad indeed to hear that confidence reigns in Downing Street.

POST OFFICE AND SUBMARINE TELEGRAPHS.

CANNES, 5.14, 8/5, 11.54,
on the 8/5, 1882.

Do not let him lose confidence in himself.[2]

ACTON.

[1] On the working of the Irish Land Act, 1881.
[2] Sent immediately after the murders in the Phœnix Park.

1882
Cannes
May 9

We have only vague reports in French newspapers, but I cannot wait for full accounts of the tragedy that touches us all so nearly, to give you my warm tribute of sympathy and sorrow. It is shocking to think of her, so worthy of happiness and so afflicted. You, I know, have, of all people, the most soothing hand for the most cruel wounds.

It must have been a dreadful blow in your own home, and at a distance one grows anxious about many things. I apprehend a violent burst of passion in the country, with despair of healing such disease with lenient arts; and, if the tide turns, the change will be felt in Parliament, and will be used by men quite capable of seeing that Mr. Gladstone's statesmanship is confirmed by the very crime which will condemn it in common minds. Assuming that some of the Cabinet assent reluctantly to the heroic policy, and that the last few weeks have not added to his personal ascendency, I fear that they will either forsake him or urge him to forsake his own ideal lines. Thinking of this, of his strong affections, of the shadow on the hearth, I could not restrain my wish to send you my small vote of confidence.

For we heard at first that Spencer had instantly resigned.[1] I was ashamed to show myself, and whispered to my family how Nicholas, the bad emperor, faced a rebellious army. There is very different news to-day. I gather that Spencer remains, that Forster redeems many faults by offering to go back, that Parnell has made his choice between murder and conciliation, that the Opposition holds its hand, expecting Mr. Gladstone to turn against himself.

[1] It need hardly be said that for this rumour there was no sort of foundation.

1882 It seems to me that much ground must inevitably be lost, and that the true moral of this catastrophe can never be made visible to the average Englishman. Still I see great opportunities of recovery, and I know in what spirit I hope that he has had the strength to receive the blow aimed through Freddy Cavendish at himself.

I long so much to hear from you. If you can think, in sad days like these, of anything but the sorrow that is near you, do give an affectionate message from me to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and send me, when you have a quiet moment, a line to Munich. I start almost immediately.

. . . . . .

St. Martin Ried Haute Autriche July 20 Alexandria, Bright, and a vote of censure have been a great distraction from our Irish troubles. If Bright, the Minister, agreed to the orders, and if Bright, the Quaker, woke up at the execution of the orders, then his conduct is unstatesmanlike and weak. I conclude,—not having Monday's debate yet,—that he resigns not because of the bombardment, but because, having troops on the way, remembering the example of Paris, warned by the terrified correspondents, we nevertheless bombarded without taking precautions against consequences that were not improbable. If he takes that ground, he will, I suppose, be angry and mischievous, and his position will encourage the disaffected Whigs; and it will be awkward even if part of the blame rests on the Powers; because, when we took things into our own hands, we were bound to do all that was necessary.

I very much wish for a completer defence than

I have seen yet; and at the same time I think that a good defence, with some measure of political success in Egypt, will be a source of new strength, and if there is some blame, I anxiously ask myself whether it lies at the Foreign Office, at the War Office, or at the Admiralty. 1882

It is provoking not to know most of the names of the people going out on this difficult errand. That is one side of the question. The other, nearer home, for me, is that you are still going through terrible worry, and that the wear and tear must be telling on Mr. Gladstone. I ask myself one question, which most people would think an unlikely one, whether he thoroughly controls his colleagues, and whether the work of the House absorbs him too much. . . . I hope you sat next to Bright. . . .

. . . . . .

St. Martin July 29

We are living here in my brother-in-law's house; and I will tell him that he must prepare for better guests, as soon as you tell me that it is not the baseless fabric of a vision. He is not married; so that there is no one to be on ceremony with; and his house is as big as many Tegernsees. Alfred[1] will be as welcome here as he is wherever his bright face is shown.

. . . . . .

It is impossible not to feel that the Ministry grows weaker by the associates it has lost as well as by the associates that decline to join. There are now the ingredients of an alternative Liberal Cabinet, consisting of men fairly equal to those now in office—with the necessary exception—and hostile to them. The ground is getting narrow under our feet, and the full

[1] Lyttelton.

1882 force of the party does not support Ministers. The want of a successor to Bright indicates too clearly that Mr. Gladstone, though still master of his majority, is not what he has been, master of his party. I hope for new arrangements at the end of the session, and for a real gain of strength from ultimate success in Egypt. But, like Ireland, it is a harvest that will ripen slowly. I wonder whether things have seemed to you as gloomy as this, or whether the light before you dispels the darkness.

Mozley's book, and all others published in England since January, I have not seen. He interests me more than almost any other of our divines, and I look forward to a good time with his reminiscences, if, as I understand, it is the divine, and not the manifold writer.[1]

. . . . . .

Tegernsee August 4 With all my heart I adopt your scheme, Reform, Dissolution, and then, let Politics make way for a still higher and worthier cause.

. . . . . .

Paris August 12 Salisbury's collapse[2] is less decisive than mine, and although there is a pleasant corner in the House of Lords, my journey ends in nothing better than disappointment and in having set you to write notes all day. My accounts show that they are not comfortable at home, so that I have no right to be basking in the ethereal sunshine of Downing Street.

. . . . . .

It was a monstrous thing to do, suggestive of Mrs.

[1] It *was* the "manifold writer."

[2] Lord Salisbury was unsuccessful in persuading his party to throw out the Irish Arrears Bill in the House of Lords.

Todgers, but I left the Dante in his[1] room at the H. of Commons. It was too late to ring at No. 10,[2] for I kept him talking till near eleven. But there was some symbolic propriety about the title[3] of the unbound volume—unbound because they did not remember the binding of the rest. Of course the impression of my one well-filled day in town—even with the part of Cordelia left out—is the very opposite of that under which I lately wrote. The session ends with a great blaze of his mastery and power. But the best of it all is, that I found him so wonderfully vigorous and well and even content. It did indeed impress me most deeply. 1882

It is remarkable how little he chooses to realise the tremendous loss of authority and power which the party will incur by his retirement, and he has no idea how little he would soon be in harmony with them. However, Ireland is not all right yet; and there are obvious complications impending in Egypt which he cannot leave unsolved. With that, there will still be time for the Reform Bill.

Late at night I found slipped under my door your rejected letter, which will be cherished with the rest. If writing made up for sight!

This letter is written by scraps, in various places and countries. I crossed with Forster, on his way to Russia, and got him to tell me his inner history. I shall be at St. Martin the day after to-morrow. . . .

Shorthouse's[4] letter could not go with Dante, and I will enclose it in my next. I have got Democracy. The Mays, considered an authority on the subject, do

[1] Mr. Gladstone's. [2] Downing Street. [3] "Paradiso."
[4] Letter written by Mr. Shorthouse in answer to Lord Acton's criticism of "John Inglesant."

1882 not think much of it. Forster does, and says it is not by Mrs. Adams. He says that Bright has no idea that he left either too early or too late. Will you—very earnestly—put my excuses before Mrs. Gladstone for my way of dealing with her boundless hospitality?

1883 *La Madeleine Cannes Feb. 2*

I wonder whether you would come to lunch to-morrow, Saturday? Perhaps I could inscribe in your most private book the list of the hundred works that have most influenced human history.

. . . . . .

Feb. 13

. . . These books are enclosed to show Mr. Gladstone what good German prose is, in expounding difficult, very difficult, questions. Also, a little book, by a very famous Dane who has grown more and more to be a power since his death. . . .

La Madeleine March 3

After seeking a moment's distraction at a château near Marseilles I came home to find your letter, so kindly written in the intervals of Parisian dissipations.

The failure of Challemel was truly sad, but I hope that Fedora,[1] following the little dinner on the Boulevard, made up for it. The tranquillity and sameness of Cannes will soon be thrust far out of sight by the centre of European life. We do our best, in your absence, to be a little worldly. Bright, Houghton, and the Mallets lunch to-day. I am to meet Colonel Hay at tea, and the little bishop[2] at dinner this evening.

. . . It is pleasant to think that Lyons made you enjoy Paris, and divined the one thing you all have a passion for, and he seems to have done the political part of his work very well by bringing you into contact

[1] Sara Bernhardt. [2] Of Gibraltar. The late Dr. Sandford.

both with the ruling men and with the Left Centre. 1883
That was just what was wanting to redress the Wolvertonian balance.

I am a little sorry that the visit at the Elysée was not more interesting. Grévy's speeches in 1848 were very sensible indeed, but he seems to be pushing the theory of the *roi fainéant* much beyond the American, or even the Merovingian, limit, if he avoids politics with such a visitor. Then I rejoice much at the visit to Jules Simon, though you don't say whether it was spontaneous or a return, and a curious question is, where was the limit drawn? Did he and Broglie, Decazes, Harcourt, avoid each other? If these former ambassadors did not call, it is matter for speculation. At Marseilles, I found myself in a nest of Legitimists, and learnt that the chief of them, Coriolis, lately asked the Count of Chambord for leave to raise the white flag. If there was more of this kind, it is odd that the advocates of expulsion made so little of it. If it had been possible to stay longer at Paris, it would have been a very desirable thing, for they do not really know or understand him,[1] and the conflict of forces there would be worth observing otherwise than in Blowitz' or Lyons's despatches.

It is a pity to have missed Mrs. Craven, who would take to you intensely if you saw more of each other—a woman of great talent and elevation of mind, but who has just written on the Salvation Army a paper that seems to portend the approach of mental decay. Lady Blennerhassett is very far her superior. Tell her all about Cannes if you see her. . . . Mrs. Green writes me a touching letter to say that she has no hope left. . . .

. . . . . .

[1] Mr. Gladstone.

1883 *La Madeleine March 7*

This is only a hasty line of thanks and congratulation on your prosperous journey. I have not yet seen either the Wolvertons or the Anson family, and to-day there are a couple of inches of snow over Cannes. Incorrigible Potter circulates the Financial Reform Almanack in the name of the Cobden Club, for which Reay, A. Russell, and others have denounced him. He asked me to read it through, which has been the melancholy occupation of a whole day, ending in agreement with the critics.

I am losing Mallet, who is less well and goes to Mentone. Also, Colonel Hay,[1] Lincoln's secretary and biographer, who proved a most agreeable acquaintance. Yesterday, there was an expedition to Pégomas (Houghton, Dempsters, &c.) and I find that the old lady[2] is the original of St. Monica in Ary Scheffer's picture. Myers, translator of Homer, is here, with a nice, newly-married wife, and Cross is in great force, writing the biography[3] and wanting me to read the papers.

Thanks for the MS., with the answer for which pray express my acknowledgments.

. . . . . .

You have heard that the Ashburnham MSS. are offered to the Museum, and that some of them were stolen from public libraries in France. We propose, if we buy at all, to resell to France as many of these as can be proved to be stolen, and Delisle, the French Panizzi, comes this week to produce his evidence, amicably, before the Museum experts.

I say nothing about the purchase, and have only insisted that —— was a thief, and that we must, as we did before, make terms with Paris. But I want you to know that Léopold Delisle is one of the most eminent

[1] Mr. Secretary Hay. [2] Mrs. Hollond. [3] Of George Eliot.

scholars in France, that he is a most estimable and high-minded man, tho' not a conspicuous bookmaker or littérateur, that he stands as high in Germany as any Frenchman living, and that I have long enjoyed the privilege of his friendly acquaintance. So that, if it should be otherwise feasible, any civility shown him by the P.M.[1] on this his very peculiar international mission, would be taken in France as a marked sign of courtesy and goodwill, just after the visit to France. 1883

This is quite independent of the decision the Treasury may come to about the grant. I may add that Delisle is perfectly trustworthy, and that we are safe in the hands of the Museum people, to come to right judgments as to the MSS. . . .

Cross has shown me, with some secrecy, a very curious letter of Dickens, declaring that only a woman could have written the "Scenes from Clerical Life." But he gives no good reason, and I am persuaded that he had heard the secret from Herbert Spencer, who at once detected it. I dare not express my doubt. John Morley writes pleasantly, but says he still feels like a fish out of water on the benches.

This is written at your table in considerable solitude and vacancy.

. . . . . .

I have just heard that Green is dead, and I must go to Mentone. . . .

La Madeleine March 21

I hope to see them at the station, and then we can make plans for next week. The hotel is very full, but Cross tells me that there is just room for them. Ill-timed is really all I say against that passage of the

[1] Prime Minister.

1883 lecture;[1] and, if other people had gone straight, it would not even have been ill-timed. My censure has never gone farther than that.

Nobody can well be more strongly persuaded than I am of the necessity, the practical and moral necessity, of governing nations by consent, national consent being proved both by the vapour of opinion, and by the definite mechanism of representation. I am not even surprised that many Irishmen should be suspicious of the goodwill of a country which turns as readily to a Tory government as to a Liberal, which is seldom awake to its sins and the consequences of its sins, unless roused by terror, and which has made amends only under compulsion, or under the intense, but not permanent, influence of one resolute mind. Even that is not all that I concede to them. Therefore, in substance, Herbert has all my sympathy; only, if anything awkward arises, it is his father who has to find the remedy or bear the burden. The danger now is that the great wave, of his own raising, that has sustained his policy of generosity, and even of eventual confidence, will fall. People will lose, not only sympathy, which is not to the point, but hopefulness. I cannot even say that they will be wrong to lose hope. But if men cease to look forward to success, they cannot be made to go straight by looking back to their own evil deeds. Nobody, then, would stand by the P.M. except pure Democrats, like Chamberlain and Morley. If I was a Minister, I would say, not that we shall devise new schemes to disarm this new evidence, not that we shall relax our efforts in just indignation and despair,

[1] Mr. Herbert Gladstone's Lecture on Ireland, in which he used the words "Irish Parliament."

but that we shall go on with our appeal from the ill- 1883
disposed to the well-disposed, pursuing a policy which is not dictated by momentary hope or momentary fear, but proceeds from the heart and spirit of the principles which are our *raison d'être* as a party and as a government. But I don't say that I should succeed.

If flurry and apprehension penetrate Downing Street, nothing can sustain Mr. Gladstone better than your own serenity. Be true to him and to his cause even if these odious crimes continue, even when you feel that the harvest will not be reaped in his time. The mills of God grind slowly.

It is very easy to speak words of wisdom from a comfortable distance, when one sees no reality, no details, none of the effect on men's minds. What is glorious is the way in which Mr. Gladstone rides on the whirlwind. You need not wonder much what I am thinking of it all.

As long ago as 1870 I ceased to be sanguine that we could govern Ireland successfully. The best influence over the Irish people is the influence of the clergy, and an ultramontane clergy is not proof against the sophistry by which men justify murder or excuse murderers. The assassin is only a little more resolutely logical or a little bolder than the priest.

I hope you will read and like Montégut's articles on George Eliot, especially the second, in the *Revue* of March 15. See pp. 307 and 329 for some very excellent criticism.

Miss B. met Cross here at lunch, was intensely excited, and explained it by saying that he is Ladislaw. But I cannot believe it. They say that Dorothea is here too. H—— has been in great force. He is unwell now, but looks forward to M——'s arrival to-day,

1883 declaring, with accurate self-knowledge, that he likes nothing so much as an impostor.

He has given me Bradley's Recollections to read, from which I learned very little, and Stephen's very curious history of our criminal law.

Oscar Browning is here, divided between the French Revolution and the Gracchi—the most interesting of all purely secular topics.

La Madeleine March 31

The Wickhams are most inaccessible people, only to be seen on the road to Gourdon or St. Cézaire. I have had only a glimpse of them; but we hope to overtake them between Château Scott and S. Paul's on Sunday. They have some wild scheme of visiting Languedoc.

Cross told me that he had asked for some criticisms of mine which you told him of. I answered that I did not believe you would send them, and he said that if you did, he would forward them unread. But I am sure there is nothing of any possible use to him. He is very communicative, and I am to see her letters and to advise as to publication. What I have seen is of such a kind that merely strung together with a few short notes, it would make a very interesting book: "Memorials of George Eliot."

The real answer to your remark[1] about that list[2] is that which Johnson gave about fetlock.[3] I have nothing to say about physical science that is not a reminiscence of conversations with Owen or Hooker, Paget or Tyndall; and it would be important to put down all the decisive works in those branches. I have

[1] The predominance of books on religion and the few on science.
[2] The list of the hundred books given by Lord Acton to his correspondent.
[3] "Ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance."

tried to know the books on the history and method of discovery, the laws of scientific progress, and the tests of truth and error; and I find that this is a matter which very few scientific men take any interest in. 1883

If I must defend my list, this is the sort of sophism I would employ:—

We all know some twenty or thirty predominant currents of thought or attitudes of mind, or system-bearing principles, which jointly or severally weave the web of human history and constitute the civilised opinion of the age. All these, I imagine, a serious man ought to understand, in whatever strength or weakness they possess, in their causes and effects, and in their relations to each other. The majority of them are either religious or substitutes for religion. For instance, Lutheran, Puritan, Anglican, Ultramontane, Socinian, Congregational, Mystic, Rationalist, Utilitarian, Pantheist, Positivist, Pessimist, Materialist, and so on. All understanding of history depends on one's understanding the forces that make it, of which religious forces are the most active, and the most definite. We cannot follow all the variations of a human mind, but when we know the religious motive, that the man was an Anabaptist, an Arminian, a Deist or a Jansenist, we have the master key, we stand on known ground, we are working a sum that has been, at least partially, worked out for us, we follow a computed course, and get rid of guesses and accidents. Thirdly (I am thinking, let us say, of my own son), we are not considering what will suit an untutored savage or an illiterate peasant woman who would never come to an end of the Imitation or the Serious Call. Her religion may be enough for heaven, without other study. Not so with a man living in the world, in constant friction

1883 with adversaries, in constant contemplation of religious changes, sensible of the power which is exerted by strange doctrines over minds more perfect, characters that are stronger, lives that are purer than his own. He is bound to know the reason why. First, because, if he does not, his faith runs a risk of sudden ruin. Secondly, for a reason which I cannot explain without saying what you may think bad psychology or bad dogma—I think that faith implies sincerity, that it is a gift that does not dwell in dishonest minds. To be sincere a man must battle with the causes of error that beset every mind. He must pour constant streams of electric light into the deep recesses where prejudice dwells, and passion, hasty judgments and wilful blindness deem themselves unseen. He must continually grub up the stumps planted by all manner of unrevised influence. The subtlest of all such influences is not family, or college, or country, or class, or party, but religious antagonism. There is much more danger for a high-principled man of doing injustice to the adherent of false doctrine, of judging with undeserved sympathy the conspicuous adherent of true doctrine, than of hating a Frenchman or loving a member of Brooks's. Many a man who thinks the one disgraceful is ready to think the other more than blameless. To develop and perfect and arm conscience is the great achievement of history, the chief business of every life, and the first agent therein is religion or what resembles religion. That is my sophism, beyond Dr. Johnson. But I think I represent Anglicanism by only one book, or two at most. Others, such as books on Church and State, cover much secular ground. Luckily, the paper limit stops me in the middle of a long prose.

1883

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Hotel Klinger Marienbad Sept. 1

. . . Here, at last, I am resting from hard times at Marienbad, where the waters get into one's head, as my letter will probably show. You insist on my recording everything on which you will disagree, so I must say that I should have voted more in royal than episcopal company.[1] In our Church and in the countries I have lived in much, one is so accustomed to those marriages that one does not think of a law to prevent them. Then as to Egypt, I was not orthodox as to the policy of the argument in favour of Lesseps, but vehemently comforted by the line taken, to make no sordid profit out of our military position, and to resist every entanglement that would indefinitely prolong the occupation. When I consider that our presence there should be the pivot for the settlement of the Eastern question, and the means of civilising Africa, I can see so much to dazzle ambitious politicians that I fear no Minister but one will ever be strong enough—in ascendency as well as in moral power—to evacuate, and I complacently take note of that additional steam to my propeller, whenever the question of retirement stirs again; and my third heresy is about the Pope. His declaration was concerted, I suppose, to hit some of the clergy between wind and water, and so had a political, not a moral aim. We may get embarrassed if we prompt and promote the political influence of the Pope, whose principles are necessarily, whose interests are generally, opposed to our own. It is as dangerous for us that his political authority should be obeyed in Irish confessionals as that, in this instance, it should be defied. Having morally supported the movement which upset his sovereignty, being prepared to oppose

[1] On the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill.

1883 any movement to restore it, we come with a bad grace to ask him to prop and protect our authority in our dominions. Long ago I remember writing to headquarters that it would become impossible—impossible for Liberals—to govern Ireland after the Council; and although I am avowedly the worst of prophets, this prophecy has had a good deal of confirmation. It was an interesting question whether the Pope would definitely and unconditionally condemn murder, whether from religious or political motives. It would have borne untold consequences, as a direct revocation of the Vatican system, which stands or falls with the doctrine that one may murder a Protestant. But I don't believe that so audacious a change of front would have moved a single priest in Ireland.

Of George,[1] in the sixpenny edition, I had a glimpse at Cannes. The better part of him, with more moderation and philosophy, and a wider induction, may be found in the writings of the academic Socialists, who, in the last ten years, have occupied almost all the Chairs of Germany, and who have been the warmest admirers of the Irish policy.

One can hardly congratulate you . . . about St. Peter's.[2] At Montreux I met a newly-married young clergyman whose ugliness almost made me take him for ——, and who assured me that it was offered to Holland. The dean of St. Paul's[3] was at Munich the other day, and delighted Döllinger, who believes, in consequence, that a more mischievous fellow than Chamberlain does not eat bread. He also sent him, and enabled me to read, Mozley's washy "Recollections." Liddon, I see, is busy with Rosmini, in the intervals of

[1] Henry George, author of "Progress and Poverty."
[2] Eaton Square. [3] R. W. Church.

Pusey.[1] Rosmini will interest you if the book ripens. 1883
He had much of Newman, and nearly reformed the papacy. But I am troubled with a doubt. His book was answered, by Passaglia, Thenier, Curci, and others, and it was condemned by the Index. Rosmini wrote a long and curious defence of it, which he printed, but did not publish, so as not to defy his censors. Liddon ought to have this defence before him, to strengthen his text withal. Perhaps Lockhart, and the other English Rosminians, may scruple to give it to him, lest they break the measured silence of their chief. It may be worth while to ask the eloquent and impulsive Canon, whenever you see him, whether he knows of it. Do let me thank you warmly for speaking of me to Mrs. Craven. She was almost my earliest friend, and I am shocked to think that I seemed unfaithful to memories forty years old. She was intimate with my mother before I was born. What does it matter that she also bores me a good deal by her restlessness, her curiosity and indiscretion, her want of serenity, &c.? I always liked her in spite of it, and she was always a great, but uncomfortable, admirer of Mr. Gladstone. Not so Waddington. You must have seen at once that he is a very estimable, solid, deeply religious man. There is hardly so great a scholar in France, and I think he is the only Frenchman before whom Mommsen has retracted a statement. That indeed is his proper line. Like George Lewis, he is really happiest among his coins and inscriptions, and was never made for the active life in which his high character, his knowledge, and now his willingness to serve a party not his own, have carried him so far. He has more caution than go, and has neither eloquence, nor influence over men.

[1] Liddon translated Rosmini's "Five Wounds of the Church."

1883 Above all things, he is cautious to do nothing that would enable adversaries to accuse his patriotism. His language about Egypt, and the future of France in the East, would seem exaggerated, but I dare say you have read "Memories of Old Friends," a book meant for invalids at Bohemian wells, and curiously displaying English minds as they were about 1840. In the second edition Mill's letters are appended, in one of which he describes Tocqueville's opinion that one must not lower national pride, "almost the only elevated sentiment that remains in considerable strength." Waddington might adopt those words with even greater justice now. He once befriended me, so that I am bound to speak up for him. We had met but once, at the Embassy, when he asked me to dinner, and arranged that I should meet, besides Lyons, Wimpfen and Hohenlohe, whom he knew to be old friends of mine, Louis Arco, and the three most learned men in Paris, and then he gave me his box at the Français. But whilst I testify what a good fellow he is, it is necessary, highly necessary, to add that he is not a friend of Mr. Gladstone. That class of scholars to which he belongs, men busy with inscriptions, ruins, medals, vases, contriving thereby to amend a text or fix a date, inevitably resent the spirit in which Mr. Gladstone studies antiquity, carrying with him emotions and ideals derived from elsewhere, and considerably disturbing accepted habits and conclusions. Then it is very hard for an extra patriotic Frenchman to see with patience a powerful government that does not always use its strength, that accepts rebuke and repulse, and is ready to draw in the outposts of the empire. Whatever the true cause, I am pretty sure of the fact that he will come to Hawarden, like Ruskin, curious to probe the great Gladstonian

mystery, not favourably prepossessed. I hope you will have him soon, and deal justly with him. 1883

When you sit down to Macaulay, remember that the Essays are really flashy and superficial. He was not above par in literary criticism; his Indian articles will not hold water; and his two most famous reviews, on Bacon and Ranke, show his incompetence. The essays are only pleasant reading, and a key to half the prejudices of our age. It is the History (with one or two speeches) that is wonderful. He knew nothing respectably before the seventeenth century, he knew nothing of foreign history, of religion, philosophy, science, or art. His account of debates has been thrown into the shade by Ranke, his account of diplomatic affairs, by Klopp. He is, I am persuaded, grossly, basely unfair. Read him therefore to find out how it comes that the most unsympathetic of critics can think him very nearly the greatest of English writers.

My good friend Bright[1] got me into controversy by sending me Beard's "Hibbert Lectures," on the Reformation. There was a great deal to say, with the usual result; but you would think them interesting as a stimulant. Have I ever told you that I have read the Diaries, letters, &c., of G. Eliot? Cross wants me to review them in the *Nineteenth Century*, or at least wanted; but I know not where he is, or whether he still wishes it.

I always see Miss Helen Gladstone in the papers, and suppose she is with you. I don't know whether Miss Renouf is in her house.[2] She is a sort of godchild of mine, and her father is, without exception, the most learned Englishman I know. The daughter of

[1] The Master of University.

[2] At Cambridge.

1883 such a man should be something unusual; the mother, too, is of a clever family, a Brentano.

Lady Blennerhassett gave me some accounts of you at Holmbury. Minghetti, whom I saw lately, tells me that our friend Bonghi has a Roman History in the press, which the Italians hope to set up against Mommsen. I forgot, to complete my confession, that I have never been happy about our policy with Cetewayo. But the general result of the session cannot be lamented, only it is not heroic success, such as Mr. Gladstone's supremacy and the flatness of the Opposition would demand. The great thing is his health. I did not come over, not being once summoned, so that we shall only meet at Cannes. Do talk about plans. Can there be anything before Cannes? It can never be too soon to meet.

1884 *La Madeleine Feb. 9*

You make writing as difficult as living afar, by your unspeakable goodness, but also by the infusion of the contrary quality. If I promise not to attack the Government, and to believe in Lord Derby, will you agree not to hit me so hard? I cannot well help doing what I do, taking all things into consideration; and as to my tiresome book,[1] please to remember that I can only say things which people do not agree with, that I have neither disciple nor sympathiser, that this is no encouragement to production and confidence, that grizzled men, except ——, grow appalled at the gaps in their knowledge, and that I have no other gift but that which you pleasantly describe, of sticking eternal bits of paper into innumerable books, and putting larger papers into black boxes. There is no help for it. But your reproaches are much more

[1] "History of Liberty."

distressing to read than you suppose, and make me think them better to read than to hear. Otherwise, I too would have a dream to describe, and wish that yours came true from January 1 to December 31. 1884

George[1] did not catch me at Marienbad, and came from Munich in a big box, only the other day. I had partly read him, but I was in a difficulty about thanking you for it with full honesty as long as I only knew it casually, by unhallowed copies. But I do thank you, if I may do so even now, most gratefully for the kindness of it altogether, and particularly for your belief that I should understand it, and care for it apart from the sender. Although in this you have flattered me; for there are points in which I dare say I do not like him as much as you do.

Do not think ill of the people they call academic Socialists. It is only a nickname for the school that is prevailing now in the German universities, with a branch in France and another in Italy, a school whose most illustrious representative in England, whose most eminent practical teacher in the world, is Mr. Gladstone. In their writings, inspired by the disinterested study of all classic economists, one finds most of the ideas and illustrations of Mr. George, though not, indeed, his argument against Malthus. This makes him less new to one; but nobody writes with that plain, vigorous directness, and I do believe that he has, in a large measure, the ideas of the age that is to come.

I am glad, too, that you like Seeley's book. It is excellent food for thought. But so is the first article in the January *Quarterly*.[2] I wrote eight pages of criticism and should have liked to send them to

[1] "Progress and Poverty."
[2] "The American Constitution."

1884 you instead of Maine, but perhaps you have not read him.

Liddon's objection to saying what may damage a very meritorious body of surviving friends of Rosmini is practically reasonable; but it is rather a reason for not writing at all on the subject. Rosmini made a vigorous attempt to reform the Church of Rome. He was vehemently attacked, repelled, censured; and he defended himself in a work more important, argumentatively, than the first. If this dramatic incident is left untold, if his stronger statements are omitted from his case, we shall get an imperfect notion of a memorable transaction, and of an interesting, if not a great, divine.

I am so very glad that Mr. Gladstone is in his best health, and that the troubled times have put out of sight the notion of retirement. For that reason I could almost console myself in looking at the Soudan. That affair has been in the hands of a colleague without much original resource, attentive to the wind, and glad to follow the advice of local agents. It chances that I have been reading ——'s confidential letters written to a friend sure not to show them to Ministers; and I have thought him deficient in imagination — in the discovering faculty—and also in independence. There is no denying that there has been a lack of initiative genius in the last few weeks, and that Mr. Gladstone would have done more if Bonaparte had been his departmental colleague.

Of all critics of my list,[1] Lubbock is best informed in a vast region where I am a stranger. I by no means disregard his criticisms. I have not got the list myself, and should like nothing in the world so much as to sit

[1] The hundred books.

with you and talk over the objections you have collected. But will that, or will anything like it, ever be? If it may, do send one line on Tuesday to wait arrival at 18 Carlton House Terrace. 1884

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18 Carlton House Terrace S.W. Feb. 13

Here is a ceremonious invitation to dine to-morrow, which I most gladly accept.

I gather, from something I have just heard, that Froude will not wish for the Professorship. As to Freeman, I am not quite sure. There can be no real competitor but Gardiner.

Dinner without any prospect beyond will be mere dust and ashes; but what awful fun Oxford[1] would be!

Feb. 15

. . . It was such a delight to meet the greatest of all our historians[2] at this particular moment. There never was so much kindness in this world. I can think of nothing but our journey, and the wretchedness of having only one day there. Of course I am going to live at the Clarendon. If any doubt arises, do not let it exist for a moment. Then I must visit the Bodley for an hour, and Stubbs, Liddon, M. Müller, Jowett, Brodrick, Bright of University.

But these are my private wanderings. Do remember that, and let them not spoil the *cachet* of their own grouping. As all passes through you, do take an opportunity to say how thankfully and joyously I accept his invitation.

[1] Lord Acton's first visits to Oxford and Cambridge (to Dr. Talbot's, Warden of Keble College, and to Professor Sidgwick's) were arranged by his correspondent.

[2] Stubbs.

1884 *La Madeleine March 17*

May I employ the fleeting and disrespectful pencil to express sentiments of the most opposite kind? I am still so stupidly weak, unaccountably pulled by an illness which is an anachronism here, that I am afraid to wait till I am quite ripe for ink, to speak of the happy time I owed to your companionship in the two capitals of greater Britain. There has never been anything like it, and I wonder when there will again. Cambridge is in reserve; but nothing can ever equal the sensation of festive home among people I had never seen, that you procured for me at Keble. The worst recollection is the parting at Paddington. I chose my hour next day so badly that, coming at 6, I found your mother invisible, yourself out, and your sister gone. I have said nothing yet to M——; but I do look forward two months to another meeting. I am very glad that my last conversation with Mr. Gladstone left no worse impression, for in the obscurity of St. James I preached heavily on my favourite text: "après moi le déluge;" and on my favourite preacher.

Meanwhile the troublesome question of retirement is in a new phase. The half Reform bill is floated by a half pledge as to redistribution which is personal to himself. He cannot leave it to be redeemed by others, who, he expressly stated, are not parties to it. He is virtually pledged to complete the work himself; that is, to meet the next Parliament. For they will inevitably force him to dissolve in the autumn, if they do not succeed in crowding out the Reform question. If not carried by an immense majority, it will be carried by Irish votes. The Lords will be able to say that England ought to be consulted definitely, that it ought not to be overruled by Ireland, in an old Parliament, and that such a change in the Constitution

is not to be carried by enemies of the Constitution until the country has pronounced. 1884

I don't imagine that it is a bad point to dissolve upon—at any rate, there is no swopping in such a crossing.

But I suppose he has abandoned the hope of himself retiring from Egypt, and if he does not, nobody else will; and so one must begin to face what is inevitable, and to acknowledge that the Soudan has altered our position in Egypt. A further complication cannot be far off. The best time to re-open the Turkish question will be whilst we are a little damaged as to disinterestedness by Cyprus and Egypt, whilst our increased security makes us less anxious and less nervous about Constantinople, and whilst the censor of the Turk resides at No. 10. The position in the East is so much altered since Berlin[1] that Russia will not long be bound by that Treaty, having a price by which Austria can be won. Every step of that sort will help to fix us in Egypt.

And as long as we are at Alexandria or even at Souakim, the future of Central Africa will depend on us, or at least on our people. I do not believe that Mr. Gladstone would revive John Company and send him to the Equatorial lakes; and yet I fancy there is an opening there for inventive statesmanship.

My eagerness about Liddon's elevation does not mean that my head was turned by the ambush of that deferential Sacristan at Oxford Station,[2] or that the Warden[3] talked me over—though he talked wisely. For I am not in harmony with Liddon, and scarcely in sympathy. He has weak places that nobody sees and resents so sharply as I do; and he has got

[1] Treaty of Berlin, 1878.

[2] Dr. Liddon met Lord A. and Miss G. at the station.

[3] Dr. Talbot.

1884 over, or swallowed, such obstacles on the road to Rome that none remain which, as it seems to me, he ought logically or legitimately to strain at. I will even confess to you alone — that that affair of Rosmini leaves a bad taste in one's mouth. But one might pick holes in any man, even in the new Bishop of Chester.[1] Nothing steadies a ship like a mitre—and as to his soundness, his determination to work in and through the Church, and not on eccentric courses, I satisfied myself with the supreme authority of Dean Church, on my last night in town. One cannot help seeing that Liddon is a mighty force, not yet on its level. He knows how to kindle and how to propel. Newman and Wilberforce may have had the same power, but one was almost illiterate; the other knows what he might have learnt in the time of Waterland or Butler; whereas Liddon is in contact with all that is doing in the world of thought. . . .

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La Madeleine March 30 . . . You ask a question on which I can express unexpected agreement. As long as property is the basis of representation, I think it hard to exclude female owners. There is an obvious principle in it, of course. But though obvious it is not stringent; because female influence is not excluded. We not only have no Salic Law, but we allow women to vote on matters not political, and we have attached political influence to property so closely, that rich old women, like the Duchess-Countess,[2] or Lady Londonderry, are

[1] Dr. Stubbs.

[2] Duchess of Sutherland, Countess of Cromarty in her own right.

dreadful powers in the land. The argument from consistency does not, therefore, make for exclusion. 1884

At the same time, I think it an evil in many ways. Girls and widows are Tories, and channels of clerical influence, and it is not for them so much as for married women that your argument tells. If we ever have manhood suffrage—dissociating power from property altogether, it will be difficult to keep out wives. The objections to voting wives are overwhelming.

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You open a delightful vista of Colleges and Chapels at Cambridge. It is not so easy to answer quite definitely. If the Reform Bill, read a second time before Easter, is sent up by Whitsuntide, the division in the Lords will be early in June. My difficulty would then be that, having to come in June, I could hardly come to England in May. Supposing my Reform vote to be wanted only after Midsummer, then my probable plan would be to come to London by the middle of May; and I should be at your orders for Cambridge any time between 20th and 30th May. . . .

Subject to these conditions, I shall be only too happy to escort you down to the Sidgwicks', to whom, please present my best thanks. If Maine is there, I dare say we can count on a luncheon there. . . . I am talking of myself and own plans; but all the time I am thinking of your cares and troubles, of which you say so little. If you can send me a line of good news to Rome, I shall be so glad.

La Madeleine June 19

You will be careful, another time, I hope, as to the enclosures you forward, seeing how long a reply they involve, and how great a delay. The difficulty which prolongs and has delayed my letter

1884 will be very apparent to you before you reach the end.

First, as to the personal question :—

It was not my purpose to depreciate Canon Liddon. I came over with the highest opinion of him—an opinion higher perhaps than Dr. Döllinger's, or even than Mr. Gladstone's, whose ostensible preference for divines of less mark has sometimes set me thinking. Impressed by his greatness, not as a scholar to be pitted against Germans, but as a spiritual force, and also by a certain gracious nobleness of tone which ought to be congenial, I tried, at Oxford and in London, to ascertain whether there is some element of weakness that had escaped me.

Evidently, Liddon is in no peril from the movement of modern Science. He has faced those problems and accounted for them. If he is out of the perpendicular, it is because he leans the other way.

The question would rather be whether a man of his sentiments, rather inclined to rely on others, would be proof against the influence of Newman, or of foreign theologians like Newman.

On the road Bishops and Parliament were taking a few years since, there would be rocks ahead, and one might imagine a crisis in which it would be doubtful who would be for maintaining the National Church and who would not. I have chanced to be familiar with converts and with the raw material of which they are made, and cannot help knowing the distinct and dissimilar paths followed by men like Newman himself, Hope, Palmer, R. J. Wilberforce, Ward, Renouf, many of whom resembled Liddon in talent and fervour, and occupied a position outwardly not far from his own.

He once called the late Bishop of Brechin[1] the first divine in the Church. I knew the Bishop well, and am persuaded that the bond that held him in the Anglican Communion might easily have snapped, under contingencies to which he was not exposed. 1884

Putting these questions not quite so crudely as they are stated here, I thought that I obtained an answer. At any rate, I was assured that Liddon is made of sterner stuff than I fancied, that he knows exactly where he stands, where others have stood before him, and where and why he parts with them; that the course of Newman and the rest has no secrets and no surprises for him; that he looks a long way before him, and has no disposition to cling to the authority of others. In short, it appeared very decidedly that he is—what Bishop Forbes was not—fixed in his Anglican position.

Under this impression, I could not help wondering why Wilkinson, Stubbs, and Ridding are judged superior to Liddon. I could have felt and have expressed no such wonder if I had not taken pains to discover that he has tried and has rejected the cause of Rome, and that neither home difficulties nor external influence are at all likely to shake him.

Far, therefore, from meaning disparagement, I rate him higher than any member of the English clergy I know; and touching the question of stability, I have the sufficient testimony of his friends, of men naturally vigilant on that point, of which I am not competent to judge or to speak.

So little competent, indeed, that I should be at a loss to define his system, or to corroborate, of my own knowledge, the confidence which others have

[1] Forbes.

1884 expressed. It seemed to me necessary to indicate that, for myself, I could not speak without some qualification or reserve, such as perhaps would only occur to a close student of Roman pathology. To do more, will be giving undue and unfair prominence to a parenthesis. It lays stress where there ought to be none, makes the deduction, the exception, greater than the positive statement, and gives me the air of a man whose praise is designed to convey a slur of suspicion.

That is why your letter with its formidable enclosure has afflicted me with dumbness. The doubt which I indicated in writing to you has been suggested chiefly by what passed in reference to Rosmini.

You will remember that you sent Liddon word that Rosmini wrote a very long defence of the little book which he was translating. He preferred not to make use of the information and not to see the book; and he avoided the subject when we met at Oxford. The reason is, that the Rosminians wish the Defence to be ignored, as it qualifies the submission of the author when the book defended was condemned.

The suppression injures nobody; it only puts the readers of the translation slightly off the scent, and gives an imperfect article instead of none. There is some trace of complicity with those who are interested in a *suppressio veri*. But it may have been due, as he was under obligations to them, and this is only preliminary matter.

My real difficulty is, that he speaks of his author with great respect, and evidently thinks his doctrine sound and profitable.

Now Rosmini, allowing for some superficial pro- 1884
posals of reform, was a thorough believer in the Holy See. His book itself, by the nature of the reforms proposed, implies that no other defects of equal magnitude remain to be remedied. Apart from the Five points he accepts the papacy as it stands; and he has no great objection to it, Five points included.

He was what we vulgarly call an ultramontane—a reluctant ultramontane, like Lacordaire. An Anglican who views with satisfaction, with admiration, the moral character and spiritual condition of an Ultramontane priest, appears to me to have got over the principal obstacle on the way to Rome — the moral obstacle. The moral obstacle, to put it compendiously, is the Inquisition.

The Inquisition is peculiarly the weapon and peculiarly the work of the Popes. It stands out from all those things in which they co-operated, followed, or assented as the distinctive feature of papal Rome. It was set up, renewed, and perfected by a long series of acts emanating from the supreme authority in the Church. No other institution, no doctrine, no ceremony is so distinctly the individual creation of the papacy, except the Dispensing power. It is the principal thing with which the papacy is identified, and by which it must be judged.

The principle of the Inquisition is the Pope's sovereign power over life and death. Whosoever disobeys him should be tried and tortured and burnt. If that cannot be done, formalities may be dispensed with, and the culprit may be killed like an outlaw.

That is to say, the principle of the Inquisition is murderous, and a man's opinion of the papacy

1884 is regulated and determined by his opinion about religious assassination.

If he honestly looks on it as an abomination, he can only accept the Primacy with a drawback, with precaution, suspicion, and aversion for its acts.

If he accepts the Primacy with confidence, admiration, unconditional obedience, he must have made terms with murder.

Therefore, the most awful imputation in the catalogue of crimes rests, according to the measure of their knowledge and their zeal, upon those whom we call Ultramontanes. The controversy, primarily, is not about problems of theology: it is about the spiritual state of a man's soul, who is the defender, the promoter, the accomplice of murder. Every limitation of papal credit and authority which effectually dissociates it from that reproach, which breaks off its solidarity with assassins and washes away the guilt of blood, will solve most other problems. At least, it is enough for my present purpose to say, that blot is so large and foul that it precedes and eclipses the rest, and claims the first attention.

I will show you what Ultramontanism makes of good men by an example very near home. Saint Charles Borromeo, when he was the Pope's nephew and minister, wrote a letter requiring Protestants to be murdered, and complaining that no heretical heads were forwarded to Rome, in spite of the reward that was offered for them. His editor, with perfect consistency, publishes the letter with a note of approval. Cardinal Manning not only holds up to the general veneration of mankind the authority that canonised this murderer, but makes him in a special manner his own patron, joins the Congregation of Oblates of St.

Charles, and devotes himself to the study of his acts 1884
and the propagation of his renown.

Yet I dare say I could find Anglican divines who would speak of the Cardinal as a good man, unhappily divided from the Church of which he was an ornament, and living in error, but yet not leading a life of sin—I should gather from such language that the speaker was not altogether averse from the distinctive characteristic of Ultramontanism, and had swallowed far the largest obstacle on the road to Rome.

The case of Rosmini is not so glaring, but it is substantially the same. Language implying that an able and initiated Italian priest accepting the papacy, with its inventory of systematic crime, incurs no guilt, that he is an innocent, virtuous, edifying Christian, seems to me open to grave suspicion. If it was used by one of whom I knew nothing else, I should think ill of him. If I knew him to be an able and in many ways an admirable man, I should feel much perplexity, and if I heard on the best authority that he deserved entire confidence, I should persuade myself that it is true, and should try to quiet my uneasiness.

That is what I have done in the case of Liddon. When he speaks of an eminent and conspicuous Ultramontane divine with the respect he might show to Andrewes or Leighton, or to Grotius or Baxter, he ignores or is ignorant of the moral objection, and he surrenders so much that he has hardly a citadel to shelter him. I dare say he would give me a very good answer, and I do not hesitate to utter his praises. But I have no idea what the answer would be, and so must leave room for a doubt.

I should hardly have resolved to say all this to anybody but yourself, relying on you not to

1884 misunderstand the exact and restricted meaning of my letter. I should like my reason for misgiving to be understood. But I care much more to be understood as an admirer, not an accuser of Canon Liddon. My explanation is worthless if it fails to justify me there.

St. Martin Haute Autriche June 20

The idleness of Coombe Warren[1] has much to answer for. I was taken by surprise when you sent me that letter,[2] and would have given a great deal to escape the necessity of answering it. Ever since, it has stood grievously in the way of writing to you; and I have conquered my difficulty with extreme reluctance. Try to forgive my not writing—try, much harder, to forgive my writing.

. . . . . .

When I come I shall have to congratulate you on your authorship. I do not do so now, because it would be meaningless, the C. R.[3] being due here to-morrow only. I do hope you liked doing it, and like having done it, and like to think of doing it again.

I still think that we ought to evacuate;[4] but I thought there would be no time for Mr. Gladstone to do it, and no obligation on others. The convention is a very dexterous way of laying compulsion on the Ministers, whoever they may be, several years hence. It meets what I thought an insurmountable difficulty, if it succeeds, as I hope it will. But I cannot look with satisfaction on the principle as compensation for the risk of failure. The cause does not seem to me so sacred or so pure as to offer consolation for the fall of the Ministry.

[1] Lord Wolverton's residence near London.
[2] A letter from Mr. Gladstone to his daughter.
[3] *Contemporary Review.* [4] Egypt.

It is an indefinite principle, depending for its application on variable circumstances. It is not clean cut. We retain certain ill-gotten possessions, obtained by treaty or by necessity. It is not evident that we should surrender a possession which is not ill-gotten. 1884

Our motives for surrender are mixed. It is to relieve us from a very troublesome and very dangerous engagement, to avoid a formidable expenditure, to disarm the menacing jealousy of other Powers. The mixture of motives is obvious, and we are not in a position to claim the merit which belongs to the purest among them.

The Ministry would not be united for common action on this question, if the motives of expediency did not come to aid the motive of principle. The bit of gold has to be beaten very thin to gild the whole of them. One sees and recognises the surface gilding, but one knows that there is inferior metal beneath.

The position would be loftier and more correct if we retired from an enterprise crowned with success, in the fulness of conscious superiority as well as of conscious rectitude. But we have not accomplished triumphantly the work from which we withdraw. We are not incurring the sacrifice of stopping short in a career of victory and of political triumphs, so that the world wonders at our moderation and self-control. We are giving up an undertaking in which we have disappointed the expectation of the world, in which we have shown infirmity of purpose, want of forethought, a rather spasmodic and inconclusive energy, occasional weakness and poverty of resource; and our presence and promise have been mixed blessings for the Egyptian people. So that the principle is not

1884 large enough as a basis for such a structure, nor clear enough to yield me comfort for the enforced close of such a career.

Do not be angry with me for saying all this—you have heard it before.

St. Martin Aug. 15 In spite of breakfast, dinner, and tea, of garden parties and evening parties, of road and rail, I have brought away with me a feeling of having hardly seen you, and of having had very little talk, so that I begin at once to look forward to next time and the good opportunities it may yield. It will, I hope, be very early in November. We left you for a very pleasant day at Seacox with Morier, and an easy journey, diversified by meeting young Lacaita at Wurzburg, and travelling with him all night.

. . . . . .

You never told me what plans there are for the short recess. I am glad the Scottish campaign is to be soon, so as to give guidance to the popular movement. There is a good deal of nonsense in the air; but I hope there will be strength.

Salisbury's avowal of numerical principles set me thinking. I cannot make out whether it is a surrender or a snare. It confirms the expectation that they will put the minority theory forward, which is, I think, their best card. Not so much because I agree with them, as because it divides the Liberal party, and rescues them from the position of mere resistance.

The objections to Northbrook's mission[1] are obvious; and yet I should have liked to go out with him, and try to understand the problem as it now stands; for it is taking a new shape, unwelcome, I fear, to Mr.

[1] To Egypt. Its object was financial.

Gladstone, and yet not unforeseen, at least since the appearance of Blignières. It does not seem impossible to combine rigid principle with practical necessities. 1884

There is not a brighter spot in my retrospect than our visit to Cambridge, the execution of it, as well as the delight of it, due to you. Looking back I fancy that I can never have said to you nearly how much I was impressed by Sidgwick's conversation—to say nothing of their hospitality. But the fact is we never talked over anything, and it is all to come.

Alfred's[1] triumphant bowling makes me hold his coat and umbrella comparatively cheap, yet I suppose we got beaten after all.[2] . . .

I have been staying at Tegernsee with Döllinger. The impending vacancy at Lincoln was announced while I was there, and I am sorry to say that we did not quite agree in the speculations which it suggested. I hope you will see my dear friend at Chester.[3] There is not a greater Tory in England, or a greater ornament to that perverse party.

St. Martin Aug. 29

There was nothing definite to quote in my conversation with the Professor[4] about Liddon. He hardly knows the better side of Liddon, as a preacher, and as a religious force. He sees that he is not a very deep scholar, and thinks his admiration for Pusey a sign of weakness, I think he once used the term fanatical—meaning a large allowance of one-sidedness in his way of looking at things. Indeed, Döllinger is influenced by nearly the same misgivings that I felt some months ago; and he has not had the same opportunities for getting rid of them. For instance,

[1] Lyttelton. [2] England *v.* Australia, Kennington Oval.
[3] Bishop Stubbs. [4] Döllinger.

1884 the Dean of St. Paul's[1] assured me that Liddon, far from reclining on others, is masterful and fond of his own opinion. Moreover, Liddon's attitude in the question of Church and State, is a matter which the Professor and I judge very differently, and it is a difference which it is useless to discuss any more.

I am waiting very eagerly for the speeches in Midlothian. They will be almost the most important of his whole career.

Forwood's proposal of equal electoral districts is another sign of dissolution in Toryism. The principle of setting a limit to inequality might be defended much more plausibly. I am glad to figure in your company in Northumberland as well as at Cambridge. Your experiment[2] is perhaps worth trying, and Stuart knows his people too well to promote it if it is likely to fail. An outsider has not any secure means of forecasting; but I shall retain some hesitation.

Your letter was waiting here when I came from Tegernsee, where I have spent another few days with my Professor.[3] Knesebeck, the Empress' secretary, was there; and I was dismayed to learn that Morier has spoken to him in the most hostile terms of our foreign policy. I was sorry, in London, that you did not see more of that strong diplomatist in Downing Street.

In the doubt as to your movements I direct to Hawarden, where I hope you will see the excellent, learned, homely, humble Bishop of Chester, whose virtues ought to disarm even the recalcitrant Dean.[4] In about two months I hope we shall meet.

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[1] Church.

[2] Scholarship (£10) for Northumberland miners, comprising a month's residence at Cambridge. [3] Döllinger. [4] Dr. Howson.

1884
St. Martin
Sept. 10

I was able to realise your late experience,[1] even to the tones of voice in certain passages, and I envied you. It must make one change. He[2] cannot any longer elaborately and perversely ignore the fact that he himself is the life and the force of the Liberal party. His reception by Midlothian in 1880, when he did not appear as a candidate for office, constrained him to become Prime Minister; and the more definite issue laid before Midlothian in 1884, still more emphatically answered, determines that he must remain P.M. Just as he accepted the consequences then, when they involved withdrawal of public declarations, he must accept them now, when they compel, and are very definitely designed to compel, the surrender of private aspirations.

The public voice has spoken this time more loudly and more consciously. It would not be right towards the country, but especially towards his colleagues, to obey it then and to resist it now. It would be not only a breach of the contract now made by something more than implication, but a yielding up of the party to its enemies in an inextricable crisis. I have not the least doubt that the position will be so understood.

I think less of the gain which the Ministry derives from the policy, the limitation and the enormous effect of the speeches. It is possible, I think, to detect a weak place in them. When one speaks in answer to opponents who are present, and who state their own case, the thing to do is to demolish it. But when one addresses the public, in the absence of debate, it is often good policy to state the opposite case in one's own way, prior to demolition; one's own way is the way one would state it if it was one's own: and

[1] The third Midlothian campaign.

[2] Mr. Gladstone.

1884 everybody knows that he would make the Tory position more logical, more plausible, and stronger than they make it themselves, if he was on their side. It is a process one has to go through for oneself, to see what the adversary's case looks like, stripped of all the passion, ignorance, and fallacy with which he presents it. We are not sure we are right until we have made the best case possible for those who are wrong; and we are strictly bound not to transform the sophisms of the advocate into flaws in his case.

An intelligent Tory might say that this figure or precept of rhetoric was not followed, and that their argument was presented, not unfairly, but not at its best.

Of course he would see the point of the speeches in the restraint of agitation, and the offer to make terms. I hope—against hope—that this moderation is founded on knowledge of what is going on among the Tories. One sees signs of collapse in their policy of reform, but not in their determination to resist, and my own impression is that even Wemyss meant to fight it out, only in another way. But if there is no collapse, I see no resource except the agitation which Mr. Gladstone still deprecates.

To my mind the most significant passage was that in which he spoke of the probable fall of several Ministries. That means that the Home Rulers are going to be the arbiters of party government. That means ruin to the Liberal party. Many Liberals see the moment looming when they will have more sympathy with a party led by moderate Conservatives than with a party inspired by Radical Democrats. The looming will be quickened by the necessity of presenting a front to the Irish. But that is only a small part

of the argument accumulating against retirement before the next Parliament, when the new constituencies will be fixed for generations. 1884

Odo Russell[1] leaves a larger gap than he filled, and he is difficult to replace at a moment of peculiar soreness and strain. In the service, I should prefer Dufferin; out of it—Bedford! I understand that he would not accept. I find Lord Granville quite feels that our strongest diplomatist, Morier, is out of the question at Berlin, but it will be ten times worse to send Carlingford, and an indication of weakness.

Many, very many, thanks for your letter, which did not seem to me to suffer from the distractions and dissipations of Dalmeny. The best part of it is the good report of your father's health and spirits.

Cannes Nov. 12

Your delightful letter came from Munich this evening after I had posted mine.

It is an exquisite pleasure to look forward to meeting in such a short time. I should so much wish to have a glimpse of you, and a chat, before the plot thickens with us, so as to get the bearings. If all goes well, I have some chance of arriving pretty early on Monday, and my first business will be to ask if there is a line from you at the Athenæum. There is an uncertainty about the through trains, as there are no travellers yet, and so I may be disappointed.

It is a very important crisis, as there is a possibility of such complete and perfect success for Mr. Gladstone's policy of Reform; and I do so hope he may have it in all fulness. There never was such personal ascendency; and I trust nothing will happen in Africa to disturb it.

[1] The first Lord Ampthill.

1884 Yes, I would give a trifle to have heard the discussion of our Revolution by our greatest statesman[1] and our greatest historian.[2] The latter betrayed his uncompromising Conservatism by half a parenthesis at Keble. It is very superficially disguised in his book, and he ought to have been more grateful to me than he was for abusing Macaulay. Brewer was just like him in judging those events, and Gardiner contrives only by an effort not to revile the good old Cause. We are well out of the monotonous old cry about Hampden and Russell.

. . . . . .

La Madeleine Nov. 12 We have had a long journey from St. Martin, and are hardly settled down in the midst of a vast solitude, when the unreasonable success of the Government compels me to pack my bag once more.

What makes it a pleasure, I need not say. If all things go as I expect, I shall be in town on Monday night or early on Tuesday.

If you are so very kind as to send a line to the Athenæum suggesting the right end and object and reward of travel, please put outside, *to wait arrival.*

I do not stay with the Granvilles this time, that I may vote against Ministers at my ease. And I do not bring M——, which is a grief; still, I look forward to a deal of riotous living, and to many sources of public and private satisfaction.

La Madeleine Dec. 9 . . . M— received an account which pleased her, of my bath of goodness and spirituality at Oxford; and the writing to her about scenes and people she knows,

[1] Mr. Gladstone. [2] Bishop Stubbs.

and trying to explain thoughts and facts, has been half the pleasure of my solitary journey. 1884

The meeting at your door[1] of the professors of heterodoxy[2] and chatterboxy[3] in political economy is delightful, and I hope it will fructify. But my friend the "nice little old gentleman"[4] will always be too strenuous and urgent for the Fra Angelico of Economists; and besides, we live in the Gladstonian era—and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. That, however, might be a bond of union between those Sophisters.

In London I could not escape a luncheon with ——, who threatens me with a friendly visit next month at Cannes. Next week I expect Bryce with Robertson Smith. Did I tell you of my pleasant dinner with them on Wednesday, and meeting Creighton?[5] He is an agreeable and superior man, whom you would like; and he is full of general knowledge. But I am afraid you will find his book[6] a severe study.

Thursday—Rather an uninteresting dinner at ——; but one goes there to eat. Lord G. not in very good spirits. I conciliated Enfield, who . . . was a little shocked to find that I agree with Courtney.

There was not a gap of time for a farewell in Downing Street, and I had to decline dinners with the Granvilles, Mays, and Pagets, and a visit to Seacox—Hamlet left out.

The journey succeeded beautifully, for it was the roughest passage I remember, and I was none the

[1] At Oxford. [2] Ruskin. [3] Bonamy Price.
[4] Mr. Ruskin's playfully affectionate description of Mr. Bonamy Price, Professor of the science which he most abhorred.
[5] Afterwards Bishop of London.
[6] "The History of the Papacy during the Reformation."

1884 worse for it. At Calais one gets into a sleeping-car and gets out of it at Cannes, after dining and sleeping comfortably. A young Englishman described the Grasse Hotel to me, where he had lived with Cross, who was writing a book. He did not discover that it[1] was the book in my hand. I have sent it back with some considerable suggestions.

Mrs. Green writes an amusing account of Dr. Stubbs's violent language in politics when she approaches him with her history. I have advised her to sacrifice everything and everybody to the object of securing his help. Leviathan will not aid her.

I have strongly urged May to write a new chapter of Constitutional History, coming down to this our era of Good Feeling, as Americans call the last administration of Monroe.[2] It is the greatest landmark in English Politics; and it has the merit of all well-defined epochs, that it is not going to last.

At the British Museum, Gardiner was working, and I wished him joy on the endowment of Research.

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Cannes Dec. 18 If sleeplessness comes on again do represent the merits of Cannes in their proper light. January is often the finest month, and this is the finest season ever known. Also it is the emptiest. I hear that Thorenc is not to let, in the hope that the Wolvertons may take it. Such rest and change as he would get here, after so much hard work, might be quite invaluable, especially if it is in his thoughts that the Session of 1885 is to be his last in office. That would be

[1] "Life of George Eliot."

[2] President Monroe formulated, at the suggestion of Mr. Canning, the doctrine that the American continents were not to be colonised in the future by foreign Powers.

worth refreshing for; and we shall do our best to occupy and distract him, and all of you, during your stay. 1884

Croker[1] was so large and promising a morsel that I postponed temptation and read no part of him carefully; besides it is a question hot with hidden fire. Have you not discovered, have I never betrayed, what a narrow doctrinaire I am, under a thin disguise of levity? The Duke of Orleans nearly described my feelings when he spoke, testamentarily, of his religious *flag* and his political *faith*. Politics come nearer religion with me, a party is more like a church, error more like heresy, prejudice more like sin, than I find it to be with better men. And by these canons I am forced to think ill of Peel, to think, if you won't misunderstand me, that he was not a man of principle. The nature of Toryism is to be entangled in interests, traditions, necessities, difficulties, expedients, to manage as best one may, without creating artificial obstacles in the shape of dogma, or superfluous barriers of general principle. "Périssent les colonies plutôt que les principes" (which is a made-up sentence, no more authentic than "Roma locuta est"), expresses the sort of thing Liberalism means and Toryism rejects. Government must be carried on, even if we must tolerate some measure of wrong, use some bad reasons, trample on some unlucky men. Other people could recognise the face and the sanctity of morality where it penetrated politics, taking the shape of sweeping principle, as in Emancipation, Free Trade, and so many other doctrinaire questions. Peel could not until he was compelled by facts. Because he was reluctant to admit the sovereignty of considerations which

[1] The Croker Papers.

1884 were not maxims of state policy, which condemned his own past and the party to which he belonged.

But if party is sacred to me as a body of doctrine, it is not, as an association of men bound together, not by common convictions but by mutual obligations and engagements. In the life of every great man there is a point where fidelity to ideas, which are the justifying cause of party, diverges from fidelity to arrangements and understandings, which are its machinery. And one expects a great man to sacrifice his friends—at least his friendship—to the higher cause.

Progress depends not only on the victory, the uncertain and intermittent victory, of Liberals over Conservatives, but on the permeation of Conservatism with Liberal ideas, the successive conversion of Tory leaders, the gradual desertion of the Conservative masses by their chiefs—Fox, Grenville, Wellesley, Canning, Huskisson, Peel—Tory ministers passing Emancipation, Free Trade, Reform—are in the order of historic developments. Still the complaints of Croker are natural. He had been urged along a certain line, and being a coarse, blatant fellow, he overdid it, and wrote things from which there was no release. It was not in his brutal nature to appreciate the other side of questions. He did not begin by seeing the strong points of his enemy's case, and so far he was dishonest.

My impression is that Peel was justified towards his party in 1846 by what occurred in 1845. He explained his views; some of his friends declared against them; and he resigned. After the exchange of Stanley for Mr. Gladstone, it was a new Ministry, a new departure on distinct lines. Nobody was betrayed. Peel did not carry his friends with him

because he had not the ascendency which his great lieutenant possesses. The Radicals have been made to look as foolish as Croker. The bread has been taken out of their mouths, as they are not to devour the Lords. They have consolations in the future which the Protectionists have not; but they are in as false a position as the Protectionists were; and yet they stand fire on the whole well, and without secession.—But I am conscious of more nearly hating Croker than anybody, except Lord Clare, in English history. It was my one link with a late, highly-lamented statesman and novelist.[1] 1884

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Yes! at last, foreign affairs are in a very wretched way, and are unjustly and unreasonably injuring Mr. Gladstone's own position. If Morier is still in England, I wish he could see him before Petersburg. He is our only strong diplomatist; but he is only strong. 1885 *La Madeleine Jan. 14*

I have bored the P.M. to extinction with praise of Liddon, and as all I could say is obvious to others, I am not tempted to repeat the offence. But the death of that uninteresting, good Bishop Jackson[2] disturbs my rest. It is clear, very clear to me, that it would not be right to pass Liddon over now that there are two important vacancies to fill; and one asks oneself why he should not be chosen for the more important of the two, and who is manifestly worthier to occupy the greatest see in Christendom? The real answer, I suppose, is that his appointment will give great offence, and that he is

[1] Disraeli.

[2] Bishop of London.

1885 a decided partisan, and a partisan of nearly the same opinions as the P.M. himself.

No doubt there would be much irritation on the thorough Protestant side, and in quarters very near Downing Street, and I feel, myself, more strongly than many people, that partisanship in Liddon runs to partiality, to one-sidedness, to something very like prejudice. And with all that strong feeling, I cannot help being agitated with the hope that the great and providential opportunity will not be lost.

Assuredly Liddon is the greatest power in the conflict with sin, and in turning the souls of men to God, that the nation now possesses. He is also, among all the clergy, the man best known to numbers of Londoners. There must be a very strong reason to justify a Minister in refusing such a bishop to such a diocese.

The argument of continuity does not convince me, because it was disregarded when Philpotts died. Still more, because so eminent a representative of Church principles had not occupied the see of London within living memory, and there is a balance to redress. When I think of his lofty and gracious spirit, his eloquence, his radiant spirituality, all the objections which I might feel, vanish entirely.

The time has really come when the P.M. has authority to do what he likes, and to disregard cavil. He is lifted above all considerations which might weaken action at other times and in other men. No ill consequences of his use of patronage can reach him. He can be guided by the supreme motive, and by the supreme motive only. It may well be that these are the last conspicuous ecclesiastical appointments that

will be his to make. He is able now to bequeath an illustrious legacy to the people of London. 1885

And, speaking on a lower level, the shock of Liddon's elevation might be blunted by the contemporaneous choice for Lincoln.

One qualification ought to be remembered. He is more in contact than other churchmen with questions of the day. Not only politics and criticism, but science. Paget delights to relate how Owen was discoursing on the brevity of life in the days of the patriarchs, and how beautifully Liddon baffled him by asking whether there is any structural reason for a cockatoo to live ten times as long as a pigeon. If it was my duty, which it is not, or my habit—which it is still less—to speak all my mind, I would say that there is, within my range of observation, some inclination to make too much of distinguished men in the Church. I name no names, but if I did, I might name Pusey, Wilberforce, Mozley, Church, Westcott, as men whom there has been some tendency to overestimate, at least in comparison with Liddon. Not that he is their superior, but that he seems to me to have fallen short of his due as much as they, in various ways, have been overpaid, in praise, confidence, and fame. If there have been reasons explaining this, I think they ought not to operate now.

Who are conceivable candidates? Temple, Westcott, Wilkinson, Butler, Lightfoot? Two of these are more learned and more indefinite theologians; but I can see no other point of rivalry. And I do not learn that Dunelm possesses unusual light in dealing with men. Fraser? Who can say that he has the highest qualities in Liddon's measure? Temple

1885 is vigorous and open; but he is not highly spiritual, or attractive, or impressive as a speaker; he has an arid mind, and a provincial note in speech and manner. But he also understands science. The Dean assures me that, Pusey being gone, Liddon will be under no personal influence, that he has more confidence in himself and more backbone than I was able to discover for myself.

. . . . . .

La Madeleine Jan. 22 Of course I know very well that we shall not make our Bishop of London; and ever since I wrote to you I have been seeking points of consolation, and magnifying to myself my own sources of misgiving. Yesterday I chanced to see, at Mentone, the best of the Anglican clergy that I have ever known, a Mr. Sidebotham. He told me of a luncheon at Bishop Hamilton's, where he sat, a young clergyman, between Liddon and Tait. Liddon, after a few words, shut up like an oyster; and Tait took a good deal of pains to please his neighbour and to draw him out. From which experience, my friend, himself a truly Catholic Anglican, thinks that Liddon, whom he deems the greatest preacher living, would not make a good Bishop of London. This testimony, from a personal admirer and theological adherent, was rather welcome to me. When I asked him whether there was any dark horse, any candidate not obvious to outsiders, he said "No"; but seemed to think that *Bedford*[1] would be the sort of strong-backed prelate you mean. He fully expected Temple's appointment. Thank you so much for speaking of Morier. You know that for all people not private friends of his

[1] Walsham How, then Suffragan Bishop of Bedford.

own —— is disappointing. He is a bad listener, easily bored, and distrustful of energetic men who make work for themselves and for the Foreign Office. Morier, in particular, has force without tact, and stands ill with a chief who has tact without force. He feels that he is unsupported and not much appreciated. A few friendly words from above would set him up wonderfully. 1885

Although Chamberlain is not the only source of weakness in the Government, he will be the cause of dissolution if your threat is executed at Easter! I really must come over and make myself very disagreeable if that goes on. It is time to play the last card in one's hand, for one year more of office and power, for the sake of the indefinite future. But perhaps the Vyner Cottage[1] may give me the desired opportunity.

For this is a very central part of Europe. I have had Dilke and Ripon; I saw Salisbury yesterday; and Scherer dines here on Saturday.

Cross is coming with his book[2] next week.

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Athenæum Club Pall Mall Feb. 26

I shall be delighted to dine in bad company on Thursday. Goschen will speak against Government to-morrow, but will vote for them. I dined there yesterday with Morier, Milner,[3] and Albert Grey;[4] and the same party dines with Morier this evening as soon as the P.M. sits down. Several Ministers (Hartington, Spencer, and others) have said too much that they wish to be beaten.

A very strong speech to-night would retrieve the

[1] At Cannes.
[2] "The Life of George Eliot."
[3] Now Viscount Milner.
[4] The present Earl Grey.

1885 position. If the enemy came in now, England would soon become no better than the Continental powers, and our true greatness and prosperity would depart from us.

Athenæum March 3

I am so glad to know that he is getting better.

If you will burn my letters there will be less difficulty in voting for Government. Certainly a peer cannot vote absolutely only as he approves or disapproves—or I must have voted on the other side. I shall be delighted to call at 12, and also to be your escort.

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La Madeleine April 9

The book[1] reveals a mental flaw I had not suspected. Because Newman, or some of Newman's set, Faber, Ward, Morris, were narrow and fanatical, he concludes that their doctrine is that of narrow-minded fanatics. This is stumbling at the Ass's bridge. Scientific thought begins with the separation between the idea and its exponent, just as much as religious thought; and our peculiar difficulty in keeping them apart is notoriously the great elementary defect of the English—not the Scottish—mind.

Pattison himself suffers from the extreme narrowness of the Oxford horizon in his time. He knows nothing about the other side of the hill; and when he came to know, in later years, his religious spirit was extinct. Newman had unfitted him for Rothe. A strong mind cannot rest without thinking out its thoughts. But Pattison rests without caring to explain which of the several systems which exist outside of the churches

[1] Mark Pattison's Memoirs.

satisfied his conscience. He grew impatient of theo- 1885
logy. He does not recognise the great importance of Casaubon in religious history, or of Milton's theological treatise on the progress of his mind. Once, having reviewed Pascal, he said to me that he thought, after all, the Jesuits were in the right. I disagreed, but I remember that I was delighted at the openness of his mind. But now I again find him hooded with prejudice. He rightly discerned that the French Protestants created independent scientific learning, and glorifies Scaliger as the type of them: and then he treats Petavius as an impostor, got up by the Jesuits in defiance of Scaliger. Whereas the Jesuit was one of the most deeply learned men that ever lived, by no means inferior to Grotius or Ussher or Selden.

Every year some zealous Frenchman exposes the iniquities of the Tudors, hoping to discredit the Church of England; and Taine fancies that to show the horrors of the Revolution is a good argument against democracy. Pattison must have stood, as to his inner man, nearly on the same level of logic.

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Cannes April 22

Scherer writes that he is going to publish a new volume, in which his recent essay on the Life of George Eliot will be included. You will read it with interest and surprise at the moral judgment.

He is also the great patron of Amiel, whom I read with delight as having a savour of Vinet—with more serious culture and curiosity, and inferior understanding for religion. There is a plot in Arnold's circle to make him known and popular in England. Nobody thought anything of him in his lifetime, at Geneva.

1885 A careful study of my *Pall Mall* has left me quite in the dark as to Zulfikar, &c.[1] I thought there was a deliberate intention to force us into war, and I did not imagine that there was any way out of it. To my cheap and pacific mind it seemed a disaster not only without remedy, but without even a remote compensation or consolation, in which victory could do us no good, and in which the mere conflict would degrade us to the brutal level of continental powers.

Nothing has so completely puzzled me for the last two years as the hesitation of Russia to re-open the San Stefano question, while we are not only at Cyprus, but in Egypt, and without any moral vantage ground from which we can resist the overthrow of the European Turk. I would willingly give up the whole country from Bulgaria to the Ægean for a few miles of Afghan desert.

But it would be bad policy to give up both and have to fight for existence in India whenever a capricious bell rings at Petersburgh.

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Cannes April 27 I cannot imagine Russia drawing back in so supremely favourable a position. What is hard to understand is her having gone so far, and deliberately resolved on war. But I see that there is something in all this that has entirely escaped me. It seems so clear that our policy is to restore Russia to the position she had attained before the Congress of Berlin, that, therefore, we are not only her best, but her only friends—that I am quite bewildered, and half

[1] The Afghan frontier. See Mr. Morley's account of the Penjdeh incident in his "Life of Gladstone," vol. iii. pp. 133–5.

suspect that there has been some tremendous mistake in our management. I should like to have the chance of distracting Mr. Gladstone with various talk, in all this anxiety. Probably I shall be at Carlton H. Terrace on Friday week. Will you tell me there when we can meet? . . . Tennyson's really profound animosity[1] against the P.M. has long been known to people in his confidence, and has come out at last. It was one reason, but not the only one, of my dislike to his peerage. 1885

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Maine, whose series of articles form in reality an assault on the Government, promises to adopt all my remonstrances in the reprinting of them. These filled twenty-six of my pages, in all; so I count on a considerable modification of the text.

I hope there will be a possible play . . . when we come to town.

—— is very intelligent, agreeable, amiable, a little complex in design; accurate calculation sometimes resides in the corner of her eye, and she knows how to regulate to a hair's breadth, when she smiles, the thin red line of her lips.

Princes' Gate June 20

No one ever saw Mr. Gladstone in better spirits than he was at dinner yesterday. I hope it was the hitch.[2] It is a bore to be away when the thing is to be decided. May agrees with me, and with that other Radical[3] from Cambridge, that even the ingeniously remodelled assurances ought not to be given; when we

[1] The reference is to Tennyson's lines on the Franchise Bill, "Steersman, be not precipitate," &c.

[2] Disagreements in the Cabinet on Ireland had been cut short on June 8 by the defeat of the Government, through a combination of Tories and Irish, on the Budget.

[3] Mr. James Stuart.

1885 have preserved peace with so much difficulty, no concession not absolutely required should be made to these dangerous successors.[1] But it will need great fortitude, and I do not seriously hope for success against the strong wish of so many colleagues.

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April I have said that I am divided from G. Eliot by the widest of all political and religious differences, and that political differences essentially depend on disagreement in moral principles. Therefore I cannot be suspected of blindness to her faults. More particularly because I have insisted on another grave delinquency which has struck few persons, her tolerance for Mazzini. That is a criminal matter, independent of the laws of states and churches, which no variety of theological opinion can by any means affect. We must never judge the quality of a teaching by the quality of the Teacher, or allow the spots to shut out the sun. It would be unjust, and it would deprive us of nearly all that is great and good in this world. Let me remind you of Macaulay. He remains to me one of the greatest of all writers and masters, although I think him utterly base, contemptible and odious for certain reasons which you know. And I might say as much of many other men. To be truly impartial, that is, to be truly conscientious and sincere, we must be open equally to the good and evil of character. . . .

[1] When Lord Salisbury came into office in June 1885, he required assurances of support from the Leader of the Opposition, which Mr. Gladstone refused to give.

1885 *Cannes Nov. 11*

I wish I had been with you in Norway or could have seen Hawarden during this most interesting time. Other trouble and travel have made havoc of my correspondence, and when you receive these superfluous lines, the die will have been cast in Midlothian. For I fancy that the enemy's only hope now is that Mr. Gladstone will not be able to address his audience.

Lord Granville has kept me up to the mark as to important matters, and announced the manifesto[1] in very warm terms; but his abrupt style of composition is not favourable to the more delicate shades of party division. One makes out, from afar, that Chamberlain is going off from the X. P. M.[2] while Goschen is elaborately advancing towards him; also that he, in fact, agrees better with Chamberlain, whilst the policy of the moment draws him to Goschen.

Our Joe ought to know how to bide his time. I suppose he thinks that something must be offered to the new voters that they care for. I imagine that the Church question forms a very real cause of division. Mr. Gladstone's authority will be able to keep it down for the time, and no more.

Let us hope for an utterly overwhelming victory, in spite of some perceptible progress on the part of the Tories. Through a friend I have explained to Bismarck that he must be prepared for this, if only the voice holds. Tories here tell me that they have no real hope. Selborne's name being on the Grey manifesto, I conclude that he will not be Chancellor. It will be possible to strengthen the new Government immensely with new men, but I am afraid a certain

[1] Mr. Gladstone's Election Address, partly written in Norway, containing the Authorised Programme of the Liberal party.

[2] *i.e.*, ex-Prime Minister.

1885 friend of ours will claim the Woolsack. The Eastern question makes me very impatient to see Mr. Gladstone in Downing Street again.

If Morier only came to luncheon, you hardly can have seen the change in him. He is a strong man, resolute, ready, well-informed and with some amount of real resource. But ambition long deferred, activity long restrained, a certain coarseness of grain which is coming to the surface, have turned him into a bully, quarrelsome and dangerous. A dexterous Muscovite will always be able to provide an opportunity of putting him in the wrong and getting up an ugly fracas. It is extraordinary what dull men make sufficient diplomatists. Arnold Morley is new to me; I gather from what you say that Russell[1] is sure of his seat. I was disturbed to find the Duke so hard on him, and so little support on the more amiable side of the family.

I quite agree with Chamberlain, that there is latent Socialism in the Gladstonian philosophy. What makes me uncomfortable is his inattention to the change which is going on in those things. I do not mean in European opinion, but in the strict domain of science. A certain conversation that you remember, when Stuart, fresh from the horny hands of Democracy,[2] produced his heresies, was very memorable to me. But it is not the popular movement, but the travelling of the minds of men who sit in the seat of Adam Smith that is really serious and worthy of all attention. Maine tells me that his book, a Manual of unacknowledged Conservatism, is selling well. It is no doubt meant to help the

[1] Mr. George Russell. He stood for Fulham, but was not elected.
[2] At his election for Hoxton.

enemy's cause, and more hostile to us than the author cares to appear. For he requested me not to review it. You know that the new Hatzfeldt is the son of the lady who protected Lassalle, and that it is desirable to speak of his wife as little as of his mother. He is a Berlin bureaucrat, *pur sang*. I have something to write against time, which keeps me at work during the night until the end of November. Don't mind it, but please tell me what happens, and whether I may come and see you re-installed. 1885

Fancy my disappointment: Paget[1] passed under our windows, and Liddon—as he told the World—was at Tegernsee, and I missed them both. The Pagets have set up a delightful daughter-in-law, and a near relation of hers, a Balliol man, son, I believe, of the chief Tory wire-puller in Shropshire, has just come out here. . . .

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La Madeleine Nov. 28

It was a serious blow to find in your letter that you had no confidence in the election,[2] but I am glad now to think that you were so much better prepared to lose than I was, in spite of what I had also heard about Bright's despondency. I only hope that it has not been a bad time, otherwise, at Dalmeny, and that Mr. Gladstone has not suffered from so much effort.

At this moment I know only the result of the first three days, and have no Scottish news since Goschen got in. I conclude that we are beaten past recovery, and wonder whether the Dark Horse[3] will make the

[1] Now Bishop of Oxford.

[2] The General Election of November 1885, consequent on the County Franchise and Redistribution Acts.

[3] The county voters.

1885 Government independent of their Irish supporters. If not, the rift in the lute will betray itself any time after the first Session.

As I am the only Englishman still so besotted as to feel Salisbury's presence in Downing Street exactly as I should feel Bradlaugh's at Lambeth, I will say nothing about my own sensations to a correspondent necessarily unsympathetic. What strikes me most strongly is the probability of Mr. Gladstone thinking that his release has come, and that he is not bound to embark on a voyage which is very unlikely to lead back to power until he is in his seventy-eighth year. For I suppose that the secret of the situation is that Chamberlain has so far played false, played, I mean, a private game, that he looked far ahead, and did not care to come back to office in the old combination, especially with the prospect of losing Dilke at first. So that, in fact, the Gladstonian influence, which would be unshaken in the country at large, was unable to control his own colleagues, and the old inferiority in the management of men, compared with the management of masses, which Goschen exemplified before, has appeared in the direction of the Radical wing.

As I know his characteristic of caring for measures much more than for the organisation which is to carry them, I conjecture he will say that he is not harnessed for ever to the coach, that he will be grievously tempted to give up leading an active opposition. Of course I should deeply deplore such a decision, but my old arguments, which circumstances did so much to impress, will be weaker now.

Three legitimate causes have told in favour of the Tories. They have not done much to make them odious, and the position abroad is easier, very decidedly,

though not very considerably, easier. Then, the case against us in the Soudan is a very strong one. I may say so now that Mr. Gladstone does not really resist it; and you, at any rate, know how strongly I thought so before. That is not a positive recommendation of the Tories, but it does weaken us, and the reproach is not met, in the judgment of impartial men, by saying that the Tories did nothing to restrain or to correct us. Thirdly, the Church argument is logically against us. Mr. Gladstone's attitude no security that the Liberals, if they returned strengthened from the poll, would not eventually employ their increased strength to pave the way for disestablishment. 1885

What you say of a flaw in his reckoning is very true indeed. In his literary occupations it appears still more strongly. The grasp is often more remarkable than the horizon. I do not think that it has been much of a drawback in politics, and the minds it would estrange are very few.

You would have written a capital review of Greville.[1] It is very odd that a man should be so shrewd, and so full of experience, and yet so destitute of positive ideas. I see that I thought too much of him, having known him before I knew the difference between common sense and capacity. My friend Maine certainly did not fear that I should spoil his effects, for I should never have found a point of contact with the views of the general reader. I don't think he likes to admit that one can have gone over the same ground, and have come impartially to opposite conclusions. His book is a symptom of the change which is so remarkable in the *Times*.

[1] The Greville Memoirs, Part III.

1886 *Cannes Jan. 1*

It would have been a very great pleasure to be at Hawarden during these festive days; and only very strong local ties oblige me to say that it is impossible. There has never been a time when I was more anxious to learn what is really going on, and to see things from the centre, and it is therefore a disappointment to be away. But there is nothing that I could say or do that would contribute an element to the momentous decisions to be formed. That Mr. Gladstone will, in this great and perhaps final crisis, put himself into the position of Irishmen and view things not only from the point of their present wishes, but with their historic eyes, and that he will hold that the ends of liberty are the true ends of politics, that is the one thing certain and known to all men, and it is the whole of the political baggage with which I set out on the Irish expedition.

I know neither how to resist the claim of the Irish nation to govern themselves nor even their claim to possess the land, and nobody really familiar with the events of this century can say that the one is beyond the resources of political, or the other, of economic science. They are problems which have been solved repeatedly within the experience of two generations. Many experiments have been made, and it is not difficult to determine which solutions have failed, which have succeeded, and to tell the reason why.

I have thought so for twenty years, and now that the question has become perforce a practical one, nobody can be more heartily than I am on the side which I understand to be Mr. Gladstone's, or, to speak definitely, on the Irish side. The claim of duty exactly coincides with the claim of necessity, and

that is all about it that one can say from a distance, 1886
without having seen what is on paper, or felt pulses all round.

Duty and necessity settle the question, but not as to policy in detail, which I have no right to talk about without hearing more what is said by people on the spot. Only let me say that I would not be influenced by hope of a very brilliant success, even if it is possible to do what would satisfy the better part of the Irish party. The people are so demoralised, both laity and clergy, that we must be prepared to see the best scheme fail. No Irish failure is so bad as the breakdown of parliamentary government, so that even from a sordid point of view that is not insuperable. But I would arm myself against disappointment. There is another point of view from which I see much to apprehend and prepare for. The elections send back Mr. Gladstone to Westminster, and even to Downing Street, with some loss of influence. I see it not only in the reduced majority, but still more in the increase of Conservative minorities at the poll, the infidelity of most important colleagues, and the reluctance with which he will be followed by members under pressure from their constituencies.

We saw the centrifugal forces at work last Session in the Ministry itself. Mr. Gladstone only retained office after the Egyptian vote by the neutrality of Rosebery, and in the question of concession to Parnell he had to yield to the Lords in the Cabinet.

How can they stand by him now, to support measures much more formidable, probably, than that which they rejected last spring? And could not Salisbury dexterously put the question in such a way

1886 that their vote then given should disable them altogether?

One sees the danger that Mr. Gladstone would be almost isolated among his friends, even if there is a majority in the House, and I can imagine no way of getting any considerable scheme through the Lords. I wish you would tell me that all this has been provided for, and that very careful negotiations have been carried on. Taking the question grossly, in outline, I can only say that I hope fervently that he will have strength to accomplish the only scheme of policy I can think worthy of his fame.

It seems obvious that, in the mass of letters that afflict your postman, there have been plenty of communications from good men of all sorts in Ireland. I speak of that from a slight, a remote, fear that the study of details, of conflicting and undigested suggestions, may have become distasteful to him. Writing to Lord Granville the other day in answer to a question, I proposed that his former private secretary, Wetherell, should make a tour in Ireland, as he has a very large acquaintance among people who do not clamour in the street. He would bring valuable information to bear. But I hope that there is no lack of information or of advisers.

One has to think of people in the background just because they are the minority. That may justify me in sending you the enclosed letter from a man who had, I think, a good deal of Spencer's confidence and good-will. I would not send it if I thought it could discourage, but Mr. Gladstone has faced heavier artillery every day since Christmas. Happy New Year never meant so much as to-day! . . .

P.S.—A frightened and discontented voice says, by this day's post, "If there is a vote of censure we must join in it and take the consequences of a majority, for we have no other mandate from our constituents but to bring back Gladstone, and if we abstained from voting we should lose our seats." 1886

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Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
Edinburgh & London

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